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ANECDOTES AND EXAMPLES

ILLUSTRATING THE CATHOLIC CATECHISM

SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY

REV. FRANCIS SPIRAGO

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY

SUPPLEMENTED, ADAPTED TO THE BALTIMORE CATECHISM, AND EDITED

BY

REV. JAMES J. BAXTER, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "SERMONS FROM THE LATINS," ETC.

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PREFACE

In presenting in the vernacular a work by Francis Spirago, one feels that no apology whatever is needed. This is all the more apparent in view of the hearty reception accorded his two catechetical volumes lately given to the English-speaking world by Rev. Fr. Clarke, S.J., and Bishop Messmer respectively. As to the present product of his pen, its scope and plan cannot be better set forth than in the words of the author's own preface.

"The great value of examples and illustrations in teaching children and the uneducated is universally acknowledged. The Romans used to say: *Verba movent, exempla trahent* (Words influence, examples attract). And Seneca said: *Longum iter per praecepta, breve et efficax per exempla* (The desired end is attained much more quickly and effectually by means of example than by precept). The reason of this is that examples stimulate the imitative instinct, which is strong in most people, especially in the young; consequently they are a powerful factor in education. In imparting instruction, also, examples are of no slight assistance, for they serve to elucidate the teaching, to render the lesson interesting and attractive, and keep the attention of the

scholar from wandering. The teacher need only say: Now, children, I am going to tell you a pretty story, and all eyes are forthwith fixed on him.

"In the present day, examples are more necessary than ever, because almost all the catechisms and manuals of religion now in use are written in a dry, concise style, with no other aim apparently than that of intellectual improvement. Thus unless the catechist weaves examples into the instruction given, the heart and the will remain untouched, and religious teaching becomes distasteful to children on account of its being so dull. The use of appropriate examples and illustrations is quite in accordance with Our Lord's method of teaching; we know that He constantly taught by parables.

"It must not, however, be forgotten that judgment is needed in the selection of examples. It is a mistake to make use of too many, and only suitable ones should be chosen. *Non multa, sed multum.* Let them be few, but good. For the young, none but the best are good enough.

"1. Therefore the narration of improbable occurrences or stories of a ludicrous and marvelous nature, such as are unfortunately met with in some collections of examples, should above all be avoided. Many of these books might be entitled warnings, not examples; since the examples are the very reverse of what they ought to be. In the pages of Holy Scripture a sufficient number of glorious miracles are recorded; it would be nothing short of folly to narrate puerile tales of supposed wonders, which only excite laughter and awaken doubt, and bring

religion into contempt. Therefore, examples ought to be true or at least highly probable.

"2. The anecdotes narrated should be free from superfluous or irrelevant matter. It has a ridiculous effect if the account of some trivial and insignificant occurrence begins with a formal statement of the place, the year, the day of the month when it took place, or by the (sometimes grandiose) baptismal and family names of the individuals concerned, the date and place of their birth, etc. In some instances the minutest details are entered into. When, on the other hand, really important historical events are related, it is well to mention date and place.

"3. Furthermore, the examples should be interesting, and of an edifying and elevating character. If this is not so, it is tantamount to giving the children stones instead of bread. Noble deeds, worthy of imitation, should be proposed to them as examples.

"Some persons will perhaps say: 'When the examples have been once narrated, they are of no further use.' That is a mistaken idea. Are Our Lord's parables, I ask, to be set on one side because they have been already related, or read aloud in public? Assuredly not; the Church recalls them to our remembrance year by year in her services. The priest is, of course, expected not to content himself with the simple repetition of the parables; he must expound them, choosing at one time this, at another that, special point to be brought into prominence and proposed for the consideration of his hearers, and drawing practical lessons from it. In this way he will, as Our Lord says, be 'like to a man that is

a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old.' (Matt. xiii. 52.)

"In conclusion I may add that the examples contained in this book are taken from newspapers, schoolbooks, volumes of sermons, and spiritual works. They have not been copied verbatim, but have been arranged and adapted to serve the desired end."

In addition to these words of the author, suffice it to say that, with one solitary exception, all his examples and illustrations are given in this English version. In bringing them into line with the Baltimore Catechism, moreover, it was found necessary to add about one hundred and fifty others, in order that under each question of the Catechism at least one appropriate anecdote or example might be placed

JAMES J. BAXTER.

St. James' Church,
Boston.

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LESSON FIRST

ON THE END OF MAN

Q. Who made the world?
A. God made the world.

The Astronomer and the Globe

The world did not come into existence spontaneously. The celebrated astronomer Athanasius Kirchner had a friend who did not believe in the existence of God, and frequently asserted that the orbs of heaven were self-existent. One day, when this friend visited the astronomer, he noticed in one corner of the room a globe which displayed the hand of a skillful workman. "Who made that globe?" he inquired. "No one made it," Kirchner answered, "it is self-made." And when his friend seemed angry at this answer being given him, he added: "If the immense orbs of heaven are self-existent, why not this insignificant little globe?" The unbeliever looked thoughtful, and presently acknowledged that he now saw that his principles were false.

Q. Who is God?

A. God is the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things.

The Godless Innkeeper

Those who deny God often speak against their own conviction. Two travelers one evening arrived at an inn, the landlord of which was a professed atheist. Having taken rooms for the night, after dinner they sat at the open window, contemplating the starry vault of heaven and admiring the omnipotence of the Creator and the beauty of His works. The innkeeper, overhearing their conversation, laughed at them as a couple of fools, declaring there was no God; all was evolved in the course of nature. Soon afterward the travelers retired to rest, and the landlord was not long in following their example. In the dead of the night a fire broke out in an adjoining house; our host was awakened by the barking of dogs and the glare of the conflagration. Hurrying out, he was seen to throw up his arms, and, looking up to heaven, he cried, "O merciful God, spare my house; do not let it be burned down!" By this time the travelers also were awake, and, hearing him, they called out: "Yesterday you declared there was no God; now you are imploring His help. It is not likely that He will grant your prayer; on the contrary, He will punish you for your impious denial of Him." So it came to pass, for very shortly afterward the inn, too, was in flames. Even atheists call upon God when they are in trouble.

Q. What is man?

A. Man is a creature composed of body and soul, and made to the image and likeness of God.

The Soul and the Understanding

Without a soul we should have no understanding. Every man has a soul, although the soul cannot be seen. Amongst a company of friends the conversation turned upon the soul of man. While this subject was under discussion one of those present said to his neighbor: "You have no soul." The one thus addressed asked, "Why do you say I have no soul?" His interlocutor rejoined: "Because I cannot see it." "If that is so," the other replied, "you have no intellect." "I have no intellect! What makes you say that?" his friend inquired, in a surprised, almost angry tone. "Because I cannot see your intellect," was the answer, "and certainly you give no proof of understanding if you deny the existence of your soul."

Q. Is this likeness in the body or in the soul?

A. This likeness is chiefly in the soul.

The Martyr's Last Word

The life of the soul cannot be destroyed. A holy martyr, named Philemon, who suffered death for the faith of Christ during the reign of the Emperor Constantine, gave the pagan judge who condemned him an explanation of Our Lord's words: "Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul," in the following manner: Philemon,

together with several other Christians, had been arrested by order of the governor of a town in Egypt, and brought before the judge, who threatened to put them to terrible torture if they would not renounce the faith and deny Christ. Thereupon Philemon begged the judge to give him permission to speak; he had an important communication to make to him. Having received permission, he further asked that a large brass vessel might be brought, and a little child also. This being done, he placed the child in the vessel, and closed the lid; he then requested some archers to discharge their arrows at the vessel. All the arrows naturally rebounded from it, and fell to the ground. Immediately Philemon removed the lid and lifted out the child. "See," he said, "this child is unharmed by all the arrows aimed at him. So it is with us Christians. Our body is like this brass vessel; the soul is contained within it, as the child was in the vessel. You may, O judge, torture and kill our body, but you cannot injure, much less destroy, the soul." The Christian hero was forthwith led out to death with his co-religionists.

Q. How is the soul like to God?

A. The soul is like God because it is a spirit that will never die, and has understanding and free will.

The Physician's Vision

The soul of man is immortal. St. Augustine relates the manner in which a God-fearing physician in Carthage, named Gennadius, was divinely instructed concerning the immortality of the soul.

The good man doubted whether there was a future life; he thought man's existence ended at death. One night he had this dream. He thought he saw a youth standing before him in shining garments, who looked fixedly at him, and asked: "Are you asleep or awake?" The physician answered: "I am asleep." "Can you see me?" his nocturnal visitor inquired. "Yes, I see you," was the reply. "How do you see me?" was the next query; "do you see me with your eyes?" "I do not see you with my eyes; I do not know in what way I see you," the physician answered. "Do you hear me?" the youth said. "Yes, I hear you." "How do you hear me; do you hear me with your ears?" the youth pursued. "I do not hear you with my ears; I do not know by what means I hear you," was the answer. "Are you speaking now?" the youth again inquired. "Yes, I am speaking." "How are you speaking; are you speaking by your mouth?" "I am not speaking with my lips; I know not wherewith I am speaking," replied the physician. Thereupon the angel spoke thus to him: "The action of your senses is now suspended, yet you see, hear, and speak; a time will come when your senses will be rendered totally incapable of action by the hand of death, and yet you will be able to see, to hear, to speak, and to feel." Then the angel vanished, and the physician awoke. From that day forth he was troubled with no doubts, but firmly believed in the existence of the soul after the death of the body. The soul, in fact, is a prisoner in the body, but so unfettered that when the prison falls, the prisoner goes free.

Q. Why did God make you?

A. God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next.

The Fish out of Water

Without the knowledge of God the heart has no true peace. A certain fisherman one day caught a great number of fish. As he was a good sort of man, he picked out the largest fish to take as a present to his parish priest. The fish was still alive when he brought it to the presbytery and laid it on the ground. All at once it began to flap with its tail, to flounder and twist itself about incessantly. The priest made use of the occasion to draw a lesson for the bystanders. "See," he said, "how that unfortunate creature wriggles and flounders about; it wants to return to its element, which is water. It cannot be happy unless it is in the water. So it is with us men. We are made for God, and as soon as we depart from God we are unhappy and ill at ease." St. Augustine says truly: "Our heart cannot rest until it rests in Thee, O God."

The Blasphemer and the Monk

No one can be saved without exertion on his part. Some foolish people assert that no man can influence his destiny. A Franciscan monk, Duns Scotus by name, was one day walking alongside a field where a laborer was at work, cursing and swearing all the time. The monk begged him to desist, telling him if he used such bad language he would surely go to

hell. The man answered: "If God has decreed that I shall go to hell, no prayers will avail me anything; if He has decreed that I shall go to heaven, I shall be saved, however much I curse and swear." "If so," the priest rejoined, "I cannot understand why you are plowing this field. For if God has decreed that you shall have a good crop, you will have one although you do not cultivate your land; but if He has decreed that the harvest shall fail, all your labor will be in vain." The peasant replied that if he did not till the ground there would certainly be no harvest. The priest smiled, and said: "There, you have just reversed your former argument." Thus the man's eyes were opened to the falsity of fatalism.

Q. Of which must we take more care, our soul or our body?

A. We must take more care of our soul than of our body.

And Then?

A student once came to St. Philip Neri and asked him for an alms. The saint gave it to him, at the same time inquiring what he was going to be. The student replied, "I am going to be a barrister." The saint asked: "And what then?" The young man replied: "I shall earn a good deal by my persuasive tongue." "And then?" the saint again asked. "Why then I shall enjoy a comfortable competence in my old age." "And then?" the saint rejoined. Thereupon the young man's countenance

clouded over, and he said sadly : "Then of course at last I must die." "And then?" the saint once more repeated. The young man did not answer a word, but went away with downcast looks. The words, "And then?" — sounded incessantly in his ears; he could not get them out of his mind. They made a pious and virtuous man of him later on.

The Three Mirrors

There is no real beauty without virtue. A school-girl, writing home, asked her mother to send her a looking-glass. Her mother, a sensible and Christian lady, when she answered the letter, said : "I am sending you a parcel by post in which are three mirrors. The first will show you to yourself as you are ; the second will show you what you will be ; the third will show you what you ought to be." When the box arrived, the girl opened it with curiosity ; the first thing she took out was an ordinary looking-glass ; then there was the representation of a skull ; below both of these was a beautiful statuette of Our Lady. Thus the pious mother sought to impress upon her daughter's mind that personal beauty is transitory and is effaced by the hand of death ; and for this reason a maiden ought to imitate the virtues of the Mother of God, since thus alone will she attain true loveliness, a beauty which does not pass away with this mortal life, — the beauty of the soul, which lasts eternally. Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain, says Holy Writ. I am black but beautiful, for the beauty of the King's daughter is from within.

Q. Why must we take more care of our soul than of our body?

A. We must take more care of our soul than of our body, because in losing our soul we lose God and everlasting happiness.

Diogenes and the Three Sestertii

Man must not forget his highest and final end. Once upon a time Diogenes, the Grecian sage, set up a tent in the market-place at Athens, and wrote up outside it: "Wisdom is sold here." A gentleman, seeing this notice, laughed heartily at it, and calling one of his servants, he gave him three sestertii (twelve cents) and said to him: "Go and ask that braggart how much wisdom he will let you have for three sestertii." The servant went as he was desired, handed the money to Diogenes, and delivered his master's message. Diogenes pocketed the three sestertii, and said: "Tell this to your master: 'In all your actions look to the end.'" The gentleman approved so highly of this axiom, when it was repeated to him, that he caused it to be inscribed in letters of gold over the entrance to his house, that both he himself and every one who entered might be reminded of the end of life. Now, no one ever reminded us mortals of the highest end and aim of our existence more frequently and more forcibly than Jesus Christ did. Would that every Christian kept his eyes constantly fixed upon his final end! Everlasting happiness — our last end — should be the guiding star of our existence, the lodestone of all our affections.

The Most Beautiful Hand

Virtue renders man fair in God's sight. A party of ladies were exhibiting and comparing their hands, questioning which among them had the most beautiful hand. They appealed to a gentleman who was sitting at table with them, to decide the momentous point. He looked at the hands of all the ladies in succession, and then declared himself unable to give judgment. "I ought to ask the poor, before giving preference to any," he said. "The loveliest hand is the one which dispenses alms most freely; the most bountiful is the most beautiful." There is no real beauty without virtue.

Q. What must we do to save our souls?

A. To save our souls, we must worship God by faith, hope, and charity; that is, we must believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him with all our heart.

The Wise King

The inhabitants of a certain city in Greece had — the legend relates — the singular custom of electing a new king every year, and not one of their fellow-countrymen, but a foreigner who was unacquainted with their manners and customs. The people actually imagined that it would be to their advantage to have a fresh ruler every year. Almost all the kings in turn spent their year of rulership in riotous living; but as soon as the twelve months were ended, they were seized by the citizens and transferred to a barren island, where there was neither food nor shelter to be

found, and where consequently they perished miserably. At length a king was elected who was far more prudent than all his predecessors on the throne. He bribed some of the people to tell him what really became of the kings who were deposed at the end of a year. On learning what was the fate that awaited him, he took care to send a good store of provisions with ships and armed men to the island. The year came to an end, and he met with the same treatment as those who reigned before him : the citizens arrested him and conveyed him by force to the island. But on landing there, he found all that he had sent on beforehand ; he reëmbarked on the vessels, and taking the soldiers with him, set sail for the place whence he had come. On arriving he put to death the men who had arrested and banished him, and held uncontested sway over the land for many years.

Those unfortunate rulers who at the expiration of their year of regal authority perished on the barren island, represent those individuals who, during their lifetime, never think of the end of life, but only of earthly possessions and earthly pleasures. When the relentless hand of death removes them to another world, their destiny is eternal misery. Now those persons who during their lifetime obey the precepts of religion and lay up a store of good works are like the wise king ; when death comes the evil enemy cannot harm them, and after death fresh joys await them.

A Day Lost

We ought to employ our time in good works. The Roman Emperor Titus deserved to be called by the

Romans, "the charity and delight of humanity" on account of his great kindness of heart. Whenever this emperor, looking back, of an evening, on a day that was past, perceived that in its course he had not given anything away in alms, he said: "I have lost a day" (*diem perdidi*). So we may say the day has been lost to us in which we have performed not a single good work. For this reason Christ bids us: "Work."

An Abbot and a King in the Chase

The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence. He who will be saved must exert himself to the utmost. The Abbot Zeno impressed this truth on one of the mighty ones of the earth. The abbot, who lived and served God in the desert, one day met a man whose dress betokened him to be of high rank. It was in fact the king of Macedonia; in his hand he carried a weapon. Seeing the abbot, he inquired of him what he was doing there in the wilderness. Zeno replied with another question: "What are you doing here?" The king answered: "It is the chase brings me here." "I too," the abbot rejoined, "am here in the chase; I seek after God, and I will not rest until I find Him and possess Him for all eternity."

Q. How shall we know the things which we are to believe?

A. We shall know the things which we are to believe from the Catholic Church, through which God speaks to us.

The Unbelieving Father at his Son's Death-bed

The religious man is better off than the ungodly. A good boy, his father's darling, was very ill and given over by the doctors. His father, who had often told the boy that there was nothing after death, came to his bedside as he lay dying. The boy said to him: "Tell me, father, am I to believe what you taught me, or am I to believe what mother taught me?" On hearing his son say this, the father's eyes filled with tears. "My dear boy," he replied, "believe what your mother taught you. What I said is not as certain as that which she told you." The loyal child of the Church, who believes all that the Church proposes to him to be believed, enjoys far more security than the man who does not care about religion and has no beliefs.

The Atheist and the Christian

An unbeliever said once to a good and faithful Catholic: "O unhappy Christian! How terribly you will find you have been deceived, if heaven is only a fable!" The Catholic answered: "O unhappy atheist! How terribly you will find you have been deceived, when you discover that hell is no fictitious place."

Q. Where shall we find the chief truths which the Church teaches?

A. We shall find the chief truths which the Church teaches in the Apostles' Creed.

St. Antony and the Imperial Missive

Holy Scripture is a letter written by God to man. St. Antony the Hermit († 356), who lived in the Thebaid desert in Egypt, one day received a letter from the Emperor Constantine the Great. His disciples were much struck by the honor conferred upon him by the fact that the emperor should send him an autograph letter. But the saint said: "You should rather be astonished that Our Lord God, the King of kings, has sent a letter to us poor mortals — I mean Holy Scripture."

The Protestant's Bible

If it were not for tradition we should not know which books of the Scripture are canonical. A Catholic and a Protestant were engaged in a disputation concerning the necessity of tradition. The Protestant maintained that the whole of divinely revealed truth was contained in Holy Scripture; thus tradition was superfluous and valueless. "Give me your Bible," the Catholic said, "and I will prove to you that tradition cannot be dispensed with." Thereupon the Protestant brought his Bible. The Catholic turned over the pages awhile, then he said: "I meant Holy Scripture, if you please, not this book of fables." "Fables!" the Protestant indignantly exclaimed; "why, that is the Scripture!" "How do you know that it really is Holy Scripture?" the other inquired. "I know it from my father," the Protestant replied, "and all my forefathers, who for eighteen centuries have venerated it as divinely

inspired." "There," retorted the Catholic, with a smile, "after all, you are obliged to appeal to tradition, though at first you rejected its authority!" St. Augustine remarks very justly, "I should not recognize the authenticity of Holy Scripture if respect for the Church's authority did not require me to do so."

Q. Say the Apostles' Creed.
A. I believe in God, etc.

The Would-be Godfather

No one gives what he has not. A certain man, who, as a boy, had devoted more time to mischief than to the catechism, was asked to stand godfather for a neighbor's child. He gladly consented, and on the appointed evening arrayed himself in his best attire and brought along a rich present for the baby and a generous offering for the priest. The godmother was a little girl as bright as she was good, who but a short time before had received her first communion and confirmation. When the priest arrived at that part of the ceremony where, addressing the sponsors, he says: "Please recite the Apostles' Creed," the man began, stammered, hesitated, and broke down, while the little girl went through to the end. As many friends had accompanied them to the church, the would-be godfather was overwhelmed with shame, nor was his confusion lessened when the priest, turning to him, said: "My friend, in the early ages of the Church a knowledge of the Creed was the test of Christianity, and according to that test you are still a heathen. As no one can

give to another what he himself does not possess, I am obliged to ask some one else to take the responsibility of this child's religious training." So saying, he bade the man be seated, and as no one else of the male sex was present, the priest himself acted as godfather. The godmother's elder sister, to whom the man was engaged to be married, soon afterward broke off the engagement. From this we learn how important it is to be well grounded in Christian doctrine, for our own sake and that we may be able to transmit it to others.

LESSON SECOND

ON GOD AND HIS PERFECTIONS

Q. What is God?

A. God is a spirit infinitely perfect.

The King and the Philosopher

It is impossible for man exactly to define the nature of God. Nero, the tyrant of Syracuse, one day summoned the philosopher Simonides to his presence and asked him what God actually was. The philosopher said he must have a day for reflection before answering the question. At the end of the day he asked for two days more, and when that time had expired he asked for four days' respite. Thus he continued to postpone giving an answer for a longer and longer period, until the king inquired the reason why he did so. Then the sage replied: "The longer I meditate upon this mysterious subject, the more I find it involved in obscurity." Our finite understanding cannot comprehend the infinite. It was truly said: "No man can comprehend what God is unless he himself is a partaker of His nature."

Q. Had God a beginning?

A. God had no beginning; He always was and He always will be.

The Negro Catechumen

A simple, unlettered colored man was under instruction for Baptism. After a long course of training, the priest ventured a few questions as a test of progress. "Now, my friend," said he, "who made you?" "God made me," was the prompt answer. "And," continued the priest, "who made God?" A look of doubt and dismay passed over the man's countenance, but with native readiness he presently leaned forward and whispered confidentially, "Father, that question has puzzled me all my life." With a laugh at his naïve simplicity, the priest proceeded to enlighten him thus: "God is eternal. Two men died, Dives and Lazarus, and Lazarus was taken up to Abraham's bosom, and Dives was buried in hell. And Dives begged God to allow Lazarus to give him one drop of water. Now, suppose God had done so, and Lazarus were permitted to place one drop on Dives' tongue every million years, until all the water on the earth had been used up, would that time equal eternity? No, eternity would have scarcely begun. And suppose Dives were then every million years to shed one tear over his sad fate until all the lakes, seas, and oceans of the earth were restored, would that time joined to the former equal eternity? No. If Lazarus' mercy and Dives' grief were repeated over a million times, eternity would still be in its infancy. Now, my friend, what is the measure of God's existence?" The man answered: "Father, I reckon God is eternal; that He always

was and always will be; that He never had a beginning and never will have an end."

Q. Where is God?
A. God is everywhere.

The Marvels of Astronomy

The ubiquity and omnipotence of God are displayed in the wonders of creation. Consider, first of all, the immense size of the heavenly bodies. Our earth is certainly a huge globe; it is more than 10,000 miles in circumference. An express train, running at the rate of 20 miles an hour, would take three weeks to form the circuit of the earth. The sun is a far larger sphere; its diameter is more than a hundred times greater than the diameter of the earth. The sun would make a million and a half of such globes as our earth. And yet there are other orbs in comparison with which our sun is a mere grain of sand.

Furthermore, let us consider the enormous distance of the heavenly bodies. It is computed that our earth is 92,000,000 miles distant from the sun. A cannon-ball, fired from the earth, would, provided it traveled all the way at the same rate of speed, take 25 years to reach the sun. Light, which travels 186,000 miles in a second, takes eight minutes to traverse the distance that separates our earth from the sun. There are some stars, the light of which does not reach us for years, or even centuries. The light of the polar star takes 60 years on its way to our earth.

The space of the universe is inconceivably vast.

Our solar system, to which eight greater and about 280 lesser planets belong, is but an isolated group in immeasurable space. The planet Neptune, the farthest from the sun, is more than 1,200,000,000 miles distant from it. Thus the group of orbs appertaining to our solar system is fairly extensive. Yet there are millions of other similar systems of far greater magnitude than ours, for the sixty million fixed stars which are visible in the heavens are all of them suns, round which other orbs revolve. And how many more millions of suns may there not be, which are invisible to our eye! The interval is so enormous from our solar system to the nearest star that there is room for thousands of similar systems in the intervening space. Imagine yourself standing at the north pole, and the sun as a pea held in your hand, and the distance between you and the south pole would be much the same as that which separates our solar system from the star nearest to it.

Q. If God is everywhere, why do we not see Him?

A. We do not see God, because He is a pure spirit and cannot be seen with bodily eyes.

The Two Servants who were Left without Supervision

Religious beliefs make people conscientious. Two servants, one a Christian, the other a total unbeliever, were in the employ of one and the selfsame master. On one occasion their master left home; thereupon the unbelieving servant said: "Master is gone away now, so we need not go on working." His Christian

fellow-servant answered: "My Master is not gone away; He looks down on me from heaven." While the unbeliever idled away his time, the Christian went on with his work industriously. Hence we see that religion makes a man conscientious. The following remark of a modern author is very true: "The most elaborate system of police is no substitute for the simple catechism taught in our schools."

Q. Does God see us?
A. God sees us and watches over us.

The Rescue of Two Fugitives

Many singular occurrences in the life of devout persons afford indisputable proof of the operation of Divine Providence. St. Jerome relates the following remarkable incident in the life of a hermit, which he heard from the lips of the hermit in question, whose name was Malchus. This man asked and obtained permission from his superior to visit his aged mother, who lay at the point of death. On the way to the place where she lived, he was attacked by robbers (Saracens), taken prisoner, and sold to an Arab as a slave. Luckily for him he had a fellow-slave who was also a Christian and a good, pious man. The two slaves were cruelly treated and had hard, toilsome work laid upon them. They therefore were desirous of regaining their liberty by flight. One day, a favorable opportunity having presented itself, they took advantage of it to make their escape, and actually succeeded in reaching the desert without their absence being perceived. They had already gone a con-

siderable distance, when, looking back, they noticed a cloud of dust a long way off, which rapidly drew nearer; presently they were able to descry two armed men on dromedaries, who were gaining on them fast. It was evident that their master was coming in pursuit of them with his servant; in terror they looked around, to see if there was no place at hand where they could conceal themselves. Somewhat farther they caught sight of a cleft in a rock, which appeared to be the entrance to a cavern. Thither they fled with the utmost speed. As the passage beneath the rock seemed very long, they were afraid to venture far, and therefore crouched in a corner near the entrance. A few minutes later their pursuers reached the cavern, and, halting before it, with loud shouts and terrible threats called on the fugitives to come out. As no answer came, the master sent his servant into the cavern, to drive out the two men at the sword's point. The servant penetrated a long way into the cavern, making a great noise as he went. Suddenly a lioness sprang upon him out of the background, killed him, and dragged him away to her den. The Arab waiting outside grew impatient at the non-appearance of his servant, and, dismounting from his dromedary, entered the cavern himself, uttering oaths and curses. The lioness sprang upon him also, killing him with a single blow of her paw. The two fugitives hidden in the cleft trembled with fear, thinking they would be the next victims. But matters took an unexpected turn. The lioness apparently thought her den was not a sufficiently safe spot for her young, for she carried one cub

after another out of the cavern in her mouth, and then disappeared altogether. When evening came the monk and his companion ventured out of their hiding-place, and to their great delight found the two dromedaries lying close by, patiently waiting for their master's return. With them was also an ample supply of very acceptable viands. With tears of gratitude to almighty God for their wonderful deliverance, the fugitives mounted the dromedaries and in a day or two reached a Roman camp, where they were kindly received and entertained. There they took leave of each other, and departed to their respective homes. In cases such as this we may quote the words of David: "This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes."

The Pearl Necklace

God often brings good out of evil. A certain princess, accompanied by her two daughters, was once driving to a wedding, which was to be celebrated in a neighboring castle. The three ladies were very elegantly attired and wore a great many jewels and gold ornaments. The road they had to take lay through a forest; just as they entered this forest the coachman, who was driving very fast, went rather too near a tree, the drooping branches of which brushed the occupants of the carriage. One of the branches caught a string of pearls which one of the young ladies wore round her neck, and broke the cord so that the pearls were all scattered. The girl cried out in dismay, and the carriage was stopped while the servants went back to search for the pearls. They were

scattered along the road, so that it took nearly an hour to find them. The ladies were terribly vexed at this accident, for it would make them too late for the wedding. Just as they were starting afresh, a woodcutter came running out of the forest. "Thank God," he said, "that you have got no farther. A gang of robbers is lying in wait for you. I overheard them arranging their plans and came as fast as I could by a roundabout way in the hope of warning you of the danger." The princess rewarded the woodcutter liberally, and ordered the coachman to drive back home. Thus we see that what we reckon as a misfortune often proves in God's wise councils to be the very reverse.

Q. Does God know all things?

A. God knows all things, even our most secret thoughts, words, and actions.

The Boy and the Apples

The remembrance of God's omniscience acts as a deterrent from sin. A boy was sent by his father to a neighboring cottage to deliver a message. When he went into the room he found no one there, but on the table there stood a basket filled with most tempting apples. While the boy was waiting, something seemed to whisper to him, "Take one of those nice apples. No one sees you." But the boy said aloud, "No, I will not take one, for God sees me." At that moment a man of whose presence he was unaware came out from behind a screen, and said:

"You are a good lad, for you have the fear of God before your eyes. Take as many apples as you like; you are welcome to them." Had the boy not resisted the temptation to steal, he would probably have been punished. How useful the remembrance of God's omniscience; it deters from sin and averts the consequences of sin.

The Bag of Pearls

A traveler having lost his way in the desert, wandered about for two days and nights without anything to eat or drink. At length he reached a tree, beside which a clear spring welled up. He quenched his thirst with a draught of water, but to his disappointment there was not a single fruit upon the tree. Close to the spring, however, lay a small bag; he took it up and gave thanks to God, for apparently it was full of pease which some former traveler had left there. But a fresh disappointment awaited him, for on opening the bag he found it contained a number of valuable pearls worth a large sum of money, yet useless to him, as they could not appease his hunger. Kneeling on the ground, he besought almighty God to come to his aid. Before long he descried a man mounted on a camel, coming towards him with all speed. This was the owner of the pearls, who had left them lying beside the spring. His joy at recovering his lost property was indescribable. He took compassion on the famished traveler, gave him bread and dates, and took him upon his camel. He too was a Christian, for he said: "Here we see the good providence of God. He caused me

to forget my bag of pearls that I might, by returning to the spot where I left them, be instrumental in saving your life." God does truly dispose of events in a wonderful manner.

Q. Can God do all things?

A. God can do all things, and nothing is hard or impossible to Him.

A Spider's Web Saves a Man's Life

It is a divine prerogative to render assistance when need is greatest, by employing the most insignificant means. The saintly priest Felix of Nola († 310), when flying from his enemies whose purpose was to put him to torture, sought shelter in a hollow place formed by a ruined wall. No sooner had he concealed himself there than a spider spun a web over the hole through which he had crept into his hiding-place. When his pursuers came up, they were going to search the cavity, but on perceiving the spider's web they desisted, as they deemed it impossible that any one could have taken refuge there. Thus God knows how to make use of the humblest, simplest instruments to effect His purposes without working a miracle. This is beautifully expressed by St. Paulinus: "When God helps us, a spider's web becomes a protecting wall; without His help, a wall is no more protection than a spider's web."

Q. Is God just, holy, and merciful?

A. God is all just, all holy, all merciful, as He is infinitely perfect.

The Emperor Joseph II Incognito

The knowledge of God is essential to uprightness of life. The Emperor Joseph II († 1790) was in the habit of frequently moving among the people, in order to acquaint himself thoroughly with their circumstances and particularly with their needs. One year, when there was a famine in Bohemia, he sent a large quantity of corn, to be distributed to the poorer class of inhabitants. Almost immediately after this consignment had been sent off, he hastened to Bohemia himself, in order to convince himself that his instructions concerning the relief of the poor had been followed. Journeying incognito, he stopped at one of the small towns, where he found several wagons loaded with corn standing before the town hall. The emperor entered into conversation with some of the bystanders, and from them he learned that the wagons had been waiting there for hours because the official charged with the distribution of the grain had not put in an appearance. Thereupon the emperor in his civilian's dress went to the residence of the official in question, and called him to account for keeping the people waiting so long. The man replied: "You have no business to teach me my duty; I know very well what I have to do." Then the emperor unbuttoned his coat, and, showing the decorations on his breast, said: "I, who speak to you, am your emperor. By my imperial authority you are deposed from your post, and you have nothing more to do with the distribution of the corn." Calling another official, the emperor appointed him to fill

the place of the man who was deposed and who turned pale with terror and dismay. Would that man have been so insolent to the emperor if he had known who he was? Assuredly not. Nor would men offend God as they do by mortal sin, did they realize how great and how holy He is.

LESSON THIRD

ON THE UNITY AND TRINITY OF GOD

Q. Is there but one God?
A. Yes; there is but one God.

Who Made the Devils?

A body of heretics, called the Manichees, taught that there are two Gods, one the author of good and the other the author of evil. A priest in catechism class asked: "Who made the angels?" "God," answered the children in a moment. "And who made the devils?" he continued. No one liked to say that God made the devils, so all looked at each other and were silent. At length a little girl ventured to say: "Father, God made the angels, and some of the angels made themselves devils." She was quite right; all that is good is from the Creator, but all the evil is the creatures' very own.

Q. Why can there be but one God?
A. There can be but one God because God, being supreme and infinite, cannot have an equal.

A Lesson in Grammar

A school-teacher was giving her class a lesson in grammar. "Adjectives," she said, "have three de-

grees, positive, comparative, and superlative; as, for example, high, higher, highest. Of the steeples in our city, all are high, some are higher than the others, but one only is the highest." So it is with God. He exists in the superlative degree, and however many degrees of dignity, perfection, or power there may be below Him, He alone is, and He alone can be, *God in the highest.*

Q. How many persons are there in God?

A. In God there are three Divine Persons, really distinct, and equal in all things — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

St. Clare of Montefalco

This virgin, a religious of the Order of Hermits of St. Augustine, died in 1308. So remarkable was she for her devotion to the Holy Trinity, that she was said to bear a representation of it in her heart. After her death, the vicar-general of Spoleto and three physicians visited by permission her tomb, and opening her breast, found in the heart three little round balls, the size of hazelnuts, of the same weight, size, and color, which put all together weighed as much as each by itself, and each one separate was exactly the same weight as the other two together. Thus in the heart of this virgin was marvelously represented the mystery of the most Holy Trinity.

Q. Is the Father God?

A. The Father is God, and the first Person of the Blessed Trinity.

The Peasant and the Prince

A peasant proprietor had lost all that he possessed through a fire. Hayricks and barns were burned down, and as nothing was insured, the man was reduced to beggary. One day by his wife's advice he went to ask help from a nobleman who had a mansion in the vicinity and who was known to be very liberal toward the poor. The man intended to tell him of the misfortune that had befallen him, and ask for an alms. But when he got near the house, an unaccountable timidity took possession of him. He felt shy of entering the prince's presence, not knowing by what title to address him. Was he to say, "Your Grace," or "Your Excellency," or "My Lord"? He went over all the titles he could think of, but could not decide which was the correct one. At last he was so afraid of offending the nobleman by addressing him by the wrong title, that he turned away from the door and went back home. On his way he passed a church and went in. Kneeling down he devoutly said an Our Father, entreating God to assist him in his distress. As he prayed, the thought came into his mind: how simple is the title we give almighty God. When one speaks to Him one does not feel shy or embarrassed. And again, as he walked home, he repeated the Our Father. On reaching his own house he found to his delight that the assistance he had implored of God had already been granted to him. His wife handed him a considerable sum of money, a collection to which the nobleman had largely contributed.

Q. Is the Son God?

A. The Son is God and the second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

The Death of Arius

About three hundred years after the time of Our Lord, Arius, a priest of Constantinople, began to teach that Christ was not God. He gained many followers, but he and his heresy were condemned in the Council of Nicæa. Later, however, the Emperor Constantine espoused his cause and ordered the Bishop of Constantinople to restore him to the communion of the Church. The bishop was helpless, and could only beg God to avert such a scandal. Nor did God refuse his petition. When Arius with his followers came in joyful procession to the cathedral door, the heretic was suddenly seized with dreadful spasms, and having fled to a private room for relief, he remained so long that his friends went in search of him. They found him in the closet, livid and dead, the floor strewn with his blood and intestines. His body had burst asunder like that of the traitor Judas.

Q. Is the Holy Ghost God?

A. The Holy Ghost is God and the third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

A Seasonable Text

In the sixth century there lived in Spain, Leovigild, King of the Visigoths. This king, while be-

lieving in the Father and the Son, rejected the divinity of the Holy Ghost. But St. Gregory, Bishop of Tours, hearing of it, wrote him thus: "Prince, as you do not believe in the divinity of God the Holy Ghost, will you explain to me why St. Peter said to Ananias: 'Why hath Satan tempted thy heart that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost? . . . Thou hast not lied to men, but to God.'" This argument was too much for the king. He then and there acknowledged his error and renounced his heresy.

Q. What do you mean by the Blessed Trinity?

A. By the Blessed Trinity I mean one God in three Divine Persons.

St. Patrick and the Shamrock

About four hundred years after Our Lord, St. Patrick was sent by the Pope to convert Ireland from paganism. He arrived on Easter Sunday at Tara, and forthwith proceeded to preach Christianity to the king and his assembled people. To illustrate the mystery of the Trinity he stooped and plucked a sprig of shamrock, and said: "Behold this little plant which bears on one stalk three small leaves, the exact copy and resemblance of one another. They are distinct and yet one, for they form but one sprig and rest on one stalk. So too the God I preach to you is one in nature and three in person, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each equally God, but possessing one undivided Godhead." Ever since the Irish people have loved and cherished this little

plant and have adopted it as the fittest emblem of their country and their faith.

Q. Are the three Divine Persons equal in all things?

A. The three Divine Persons are equal in all things.

The Doxology

Cardinal Bona thinks that the first part of the Doxology or "Glory be to the Father," etc, was composed by the apostles themselves. The Council of Vaison, 529 A.D., was the first to ordain the singing of it at the end of each psalm. The second part, "As it was in the beginning," etc., was added by the Council of Nicæa in 325 as an offset to an Arian heresy. As often as the Doxology is recited, the head should be bowed in adoration of the mystery of the Trinity.

Q. Are the three Divine Persons one and the same God?

A. The three Divine Persons are one and the same God, having one and the same divine nature and substance.

The Conductor and the Lawyer

On a street car an infidel lawyer noticed the conductor raise his hat on passing a church or whenever a priest got aboard. To show his smartness, he asked the man why he did so. The conductor replied that he did so in honor of the Blessed Sacra-

ment. "And I suppose," continued the lawyer, "you even believe in the Trinity. Can you explain the Trinity?" The conductor answered: "I believe in the mystery most assuredly, but I cannot explain it. But can you explain to me how you move your finger?" "Because I will it," rejoined the lawyer. "Why, then," demanded the conductor, "cannot you will to move your ears?" The lawyer was confounded, and hastened to leave the car, when the conductor, turning to another passenger, said: "I declare I feared he would beat my argument by moving his ears, for a man who will only believe what he can see and understand is little better than an ass."

Q. Can we fully understand how the three Divine Persons are one and the same God?

A. We cannot fully understand how the three Divine Persons are one and the same God, because this is a mystery.

St. Augustine and the Sea

The mystery of the Trinity is incomprehensible. The following anecdote is related of St. Augustine, the great theologian and Doctor of the Church. For many nights and days he had been meditating on the mystery of the Holy Trinity; he was of the opinion that one must at length attain thorough knowledge and understanding of the doctrine. One day he was walking on the sea-shore, pondering on this subject, when he saw a little boy who was engaged in carrying some of the sea-water in a shell

to a trench which he had dug. St. Augustine stopped and asked the child what he was doing. He answered: "I want to empty all the water of the ocean into this pit." The saint shook his head, and said: "My child, that is impossible!" The boy looked up and smiled. "It would be easier," he replied, "to empty all the sea into this trench than to fathom the mystery of the Holy Trinity." Our finite intelligence can no more comprehend the nature of the infinite Deity than the waters of the ocean can be confined in a vessel of human manufacture.

Q. What is a mystery?

A. A mystery is a truth which we cannot fully understand.

The Word of a Missionary

If we believe man, how much the more ought we to believe God! A missionary from Europe went to preach the Gospel in a heathen country situated in the tropics. Once upon a time he told the natives that in his country during winter the water became so hard that an elephant could walk on it. The natives, who only knew water as always warm and even boiling in certain springs, could not imagine such a thing to be possible. Yet as they knew the missionary to be an upright and honorable man, they did not doubt him but believed his statement. If we give credence to the word of a man of known integrity, how much more ought we unhesitatingly to believe the word of God.

LESSON FOURTH

ON CREATION

Q. Who created heaven and earth, and all things?
A. God created heaven and earth, and all things.

The Acorn and the Pumpkin

The wisdom of God is displayed in creation. A man was lying in the shade of a spreading oak tree one hot summer's day. As he looked idly about him, he saw a pumpkin vine trained on a fence, from which large, heavy pumpkins were hanging. "That is a very bad arrangement," he said to himself, "that slender, fragile plant bears such large fruits, while a stalwart tree, such as this oak beneath which I am resting, only bears tiny acorns. If I had made the world, I should have ordered things more wisely." As he finished speaking an acorn fell from the tree, and smote him on the nose so sharply that his nose began to bleed. This unexpected blow taught the conceited man a lesson. "I must acknowledge," he said, "that God has arranged everything very wisely. Had the acorn that fell been the size of a pumpkin, and dropped from the height it did, I should have been stunned, or at least my nose would have been broken. What we learn at school is quite true: God has ordained all things in

creation with wisdom and forethought." How foolish are those who think they know better than the all-wise Creator!

Q. How did God create heaven and earth?

A. God created heaven and earth from nothing by His word only; that is, by a single act of His all-powerful will.

The Firmament is Upheld by Divine Power

If we consider the universe, we shall assuredly be compelled to admire the omnipotence of God. A German prince was one day conducting a foreign ambassador over his palace and calling his attention to the strength of its walls, the beauty of its architecture and decorations. The court fool who, according to the custom of former days, followed his master everywhere and was allowed perfect liberty of speech, put in his word. "Your Highness," he said, "do not boast too much about your palace. It may well stand firm and strong; it has massive columns to uphold it, it rests upon solid foundations. But just look up to heaven. The Lord who reigns above needs neither pillars nor foundations to support the immeasurable dome He constructed; He upholds it by His omnipotent will alone. One must needs respect so great a Potentate!"

Q. Which are the chief creatures of God?

A. The chief creatures of God are angels and men.

Pasteur's Experiments

On the third day God created the trees and green herbs; on the fifth and sixth He created living creatures. Those who assert that God created everything at once, and that the things He had called into being were developed successively on the several days of creation, are greatly mistaken. It is quite impossible that the germs of vegetation should have existed on the first day, for the earth was then in a state of incandescence, and fire destroys life, both vegetable and animal. Moreover, out of lifeless matter life cannot be evolved: *omne vivum ex vivo.* Pasteur, the professor of chemistry in Paris, who has made for himself a world-wide reputation, proved the truth of this axiom by a series of experiments. He boiled different kinds of water and filled bottles with them, which were then hermetically sealed, and left standing for a year. At the lapse of that time he examined the water with the aid of a microscope, to ascertain if any animalculæ were in it. No trace of any living creature was to be discovered in these bottles, whereas in every single drop of water which had been exposed to the air hundreds of living creatures were found to exist. Thereupon he exposed the glasses of water to the action of air which had passed through red-hot tubes, but no animal life was to be found in them. He next exposed them to air which had passed through tubes partially stuffed with wool; the result was the same. Finally the vessels containing water were placed in the open air for a minute only, and in a few hours' time the water

teemed with minute animalculæ. Thus it was conclusively proved that the germs of life are in the atmosphere; in the last experiment they were communicated to the water, and there developed into living creatures. Animal life cannot be evolved out of lifeless matter; the theory of spontaneous generation is utterly false.

Q. What are angels?

A. Angels are pure spirits without a body, created to adore and enjoy God in heaven.

The Protection of the Angels

He hath given His angels charge over us, especially over children. On the 8th of July, 1890, in a village near Prague, a little girl four years of age fell out of a window in the second story of her father's house into the courtyard below. Her mother, terrified, rushed into the yard and caught up the child; she was not only alive, but had not sustained the slightest injury. Her mother took her to the hospital, where she was examined by a medical man but he could not discover so much as a bruise.

On the 3d of May, 1893, in one of the streets of Paris, a little girl three years of age fell from a window in the fifth story of a house, and was not hurt in the slightest degree.

On the 9th of July, 1895, the three-year-old son of Prince Alexander Salm, while traveling by rail near Vienna, fell out of the railway coach, the door of which had been torn open by a violent gust of wind. The guard was rung for, and the train was stopped;

to the astonishment of all beholders the little fellow was seen running after the train safe and sound.

Q. Were the angels created for any other purpose?
A. The angels were also created to assist before the throne of God and to minister unto Him; they have often been sent as messengers from God to man; and are also appointed our guardians.

The School Children out in a Storm

Children are often favored by the miraculous protection of their guardian angels. In the year 1890 the children of a village school near Reichenberg in Bohemia were taken on an excursion into the woods for a treat. While they were at play a heavy storm came up and the rain came pelting down. A party of children — thirty-one in number — sought shelter under a gigantic fir tree. All at once one of them — a little girl — felt irresistibly urged to leave the shelter of that tree ; she ran away, dragging two or three others with her, while the remainder followed of their own accord. They had scarcely got a few feet from the tree when it was struck by lightning, and torn asunder with a terrific crash. Singularly enough, the tree thus struck formed a kind of cross. The parents of the children piously ascribed their rescue from death to the kind protection of their guardian angels, and out of gratitude they erected a cross on the spot where the tree had stood.

(This incident is recorded in the *Reichenberger Zeitung* of 17th of May, 1890.)

Pope Leo Confronts Attila

In the fifth century the Huns, an Asiatic tribe of barbarians, overran Europe, working havoc and devastation wherever they went. They extended their ravages to Italy; after having burnt several towns, Attila, their king, determined to pursue his conquests farther south and destroy Rome also. Indescribable was the terror of the inhabitants when they heard that the Huns were advancing upon their city. But Pope Leo the Great was not intimidated. He relied on the divine protection, and called upon all the inhabitants of the Eternal City to pray fervently for assistance from on high. When Attila, with his five hundred thousand soldiers, was seen approaching, Pope Leo, arrayed in his pontificals and attended by a long train of clergy, went out to meet him. He boldly confronted the king of the Huns, threatening him with the divine judgments if he ventured to enter the city. The dignified bearing of the Pope and his forcible words made so deep an impression on the barbarian monarch that he promised to keep the peace, and immediately withdrew his forces from the neighborhood of Rome. It is said that a shining figure appeared to Attila behind the Pontiff, wielding a sword with a menacing gesture, and that determined him to accede so readily to the Pope's request.

Q. Were the angels, as God created them, good and happy?

A. The angels, as God created them, were good and happy.

The Sheep and the Birds

A child once noticed how the thorns in a quickset hedge tore the wool of the sheep. In his ignorance he went to his father and begged him to cut down the hedge that did the mischief. But his father was not so hasty and impetuous; he bade the child sit down on the hill near the hedge and watch the little birds. He did so, and before long he saw the feathered songsters come and carry off the wool to line their nests. Then the boy's father said to him: "Do you see how useful this wool is to keep the poor little unfledged nestlings warm? The sheep do not feel the loss of a few bits of wool. Now would you have me cut down the hedge?" The child begged that he would not do so. That is the way with many people; they draw conclusions hastily, without due reflection, and therefore they fail to appreciate the wisdom that directs the world.

Q. Did all the angels remain good and happy?

A. All the angels did not remain good and happy; many of them sinned and were cast into hell, and these are called devils or bad angels.

A Free-thinker's Fears

There are evil as well as good angels. Hobbes, a well-known English free-thinker, used confidently to assert that there was neither God nor angel, still less did he believe in a devil. Strange to say, despite his boasted unbelief, this man had the greatest dread of evil spirits; even in his old age he

was afraid of sleeping alone in a room. What he openly denied he secretly believed.

Two Children Saved by their Piety

We ought to invoke our angel guardians and ask their protection. In a remote town in the Tyrol the alarm bell one night woke all the inhabitants out of their sleep. Two of the largest houses were in flames. From one of these the inmates escaped by the staircase only with the greatest difficulty. In their hurry and alarm they forgot to rescue two children who were sleeping in the attic. These two children — both girls, one aged eight, the other twelve years — only awoke when they were startled by the crackling of the boards constituting the flooring of their rooms, which had caught fire from below. They sprang up and rushed to the door; but on opening it they were almost stifled by the smoke and flames that met them, and hardly succeeded in closing it again. The elder girl then ran to the window, saying: "We must jump out of the window. I will jump first, and if I get to the ground without being hurt, do you come after me." Calling on her angel guardian to help her, she sprang out. She fell on the ground but, instantly rising, she cried out joyously, "Come along, Jenny, I am not a bit hurt!" The other child then took the perilous leap, and she, too, escaped without the slightest injury. She also had invoked the aid of her guardian angel. The parents of the children were delighted and thankful to God to see them safe and sound.

LESSON FIFTH

ON OUR FIRST PARENTS AND THE FALL

Q. Who were the first man and woman?
A. The first man and woman were Adam and Eve.

The Hen's Egg

The world did not come into existence without a Creator. A young man who had finished his studies at the high school came home with an overweening idea of his knowledge and wisdom. Amongst other foolish theories which he enunciated, he asserted that the world was not made, it came into existence of itself, and was not the work of a Creator. His mother, a simple but sensible woman, let him run on, and listened in silence; at length she said: "Since you have such definite knowledge on all these matters, tell me, did the egg exist first, or the hen?" "The egg existed first," the youth replied, "all chickens come out of eggs." His mother continued: "That is impossible, for the egg comes from the hen, therefore the priority of existence belongs to the hen." Her son answered: "Perhaps you are right, mother." But she said again: "Yet you must not forget that there is never a hen that did not originally come out of an egg." The youth

was silent, and looked abashed. "You will never be wise," his mother said to him, "if you do not believe in the Creator. The whole world will be an inexplicable puzzle to you and an enigma. Believe in God, and you will have the key to that enigma. Then only will you acquire true wisdom." The hen indisputably existed before the egg, for the hen lays the egg, and has to hatch it if the young bird is to come out of it. Therefore God created the first hen.

Q. Were Adam and Eve innocent and holy when they came from the hand of God?

A. Adam and Eve were innocent and holy when they came from the hand of God.

The Decision Goes to Virtue

Original justice consisted of a sound mind in a sound body; of a perfect subjection of the lower parts of creation to the higher, of man's lower to his higher nature; and of the complete harmony thus established between creatures and man, between man's body and soul, and between man and God. Crantor, a Greek philosopher who lived about three hundred years before Christ, relates that one day the divinities, Wealth, Pleasure, Honor, Health, and Virtue, suddenly appeared before the throng at the Olympic games and asked the judges of the Areopagus to decide which of them most favorably influenced man's happiness. Wealth dazzled for a moment the judges' eyes, but Pleasure soon showed that he was only a means to her as an end. Honor claimed

that Wealth and Pleasure were but things of a day unless linked to lasting renown, but then up rose Health and declared that without her all three were practically worthless. Virtue ended the dispute by making all the Greeks admit that even glory is but transitory, and that Wealth, Pleasure, Honor, and Health, without Virtue, become evils for those who do not know how to use them with discretion.

Q. Did God give any command to Adam and Eve?
A. To try their obedience, God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of a certain fruit which grew in the garden of Paradise.

The Bunch of Grapes

It is related of St. Macarius, one of the Fathers of the desert, that, having received as a present a beautiful bunch of grapes, though he longed to taste them, he, to exercise himself in self-denial and obedience to his rule, resolved not to do so, but sent them with his compliments to a neighboring hermit. He, inspired with the same holy motives, sent them to a third; the third to a fourth, and so on until finally the grapes, having passed through most of the cells in the desert, came back to St. Macarius practically untouched. The latter, on receiving them and on learning after inquiry through whose hands they had passed, gave thanks to God that in the world should be found so many faithful sons of Adam and Eve to make reparation for their parents' transgression.

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Q. Which were the chief blessings intended for Adam and Eve had they remained faithful to God?

A. The chief blessings intended for Adam and Eve, had they remained faithful to God, were a constant state of happiness in this life and everlasting glory in the next.

Happiness on Earth and in Heaven

When St. Bernard and four of his brothers had determined to leave the world and devote themselves to the religious life, they paid a visit to Fontaines to ask their father's blessing. On bidding farewell to their home and family, one of them said to their young brother, Nivard: "Good-bye, Nivard; you are now heir to all our father's possessions, and will enjoy the pleasures of wealth and honorable station." "Ah, yes!" replied Nivard, "you take heaven and leave me earth; the shares are not equal, and I will not be satisfied with mine." And, in fact, when he had grown to man's estate, and his father had no longer need of his services, Nivard, too, entered the convent.

Q. Did Adam and Eve remain faithful to God?

A. Adam and Eve did not remain faithful to God; but broke His command by eating the forbidden fruit.

Who is Happy besides God?

Charles the Ninth, king of France, once asked the celebrated poet, Torquato Tasso, whom he regarded as the happiest being. The poet answered: "God." "Everybody knows that," said the king. "What I

want to know is who is the next happiest after God." The poet replied: "Undoubtedly the happiest being after God is he who most closely resembles God, that is to say, whoever is most perfect in virtue."

Q. What befell Adam and Eve on account of their sin?

A. Adam and Eve, on account of their sin, lost innocence and holiness, and were doomed to sickness and death.

The Woodcutter's Conceit

We should have fallen into the sin of our first parents much more readily than they did, had we been in their place. In the employ of a prince there was a certain woodcutter who, while he was at work, was wont to inveigh against Adam and Eve for eating the forbidden fruit, abusing them roundly for having transgressed so easy a commandment and thereby brought such unbounded misery on their posterity. "I and my wife would not have been such fools," he said. His employer overheard this speech, and said: "Well, well, we shall see. From this day forth you and your wife shall live at my expense and have it almost as well as Adam and Eve in Paradise; but the day of probation will come." The wedded couple were given good rooms and grand clothes, they were not obliged to work, their daily food was brought from their master's table, labor and anxiety were at an end for them. Then came the day of probation. One gala day the prince had them to dine at his table, and sumptuous viands

were set before them; at last a dish closely covered was placed on the table and their host said: "You can eat of every dish except this one; that is to be left until I return. You must not so much as touch it." He then left the dining-hall and was absent for a long time. The two guests began to get impatient, their curiosity was awakened; it got stronger and stronger. At length the woman could resist no longer; she gently raised the cover. But the harm was done; a beautiful little bird flew out, and disappeared out of the window. Then the master of the house came back, and drove out both the man and his wife, bidding them be wiser in future. Here we have an example of human frailty.

Q. What evil befell us on account of the disobedience of our first parents?

A. On account of the disobedience of our first parents, we all share in their sin and punishment, as we should have shared in their happiness if they had remained faithful.

The Heirs of an Estate

We are all inheritors of Adam's sin and its consequences. An emperor once gave a large estate to one of his subjects, a man of rank, on condition that he should always be faithful to him. But the nobleman proved a traitor. Thereupon the emperor took his land and his title from him and banished him from his dominions. The man's treachery brought misfortune on his children; they could not inherit either the property or the title that had been their father's. All

that he could bequeath to them was a legacy of disgrace and poverty. Our case is a similar one. Our first parents had and lost their supernatural privileges, and we also are deprived of them. They caused injury to both the soul and body; this is handed down to us. Only one thing is beyond our power to comprehend, that we inherit the sin of Adam; this is and ever will be a mystery of faith.

Q. What other effects followed from the sin of our first parents?

A. Our nature was corrupted by the sin of our first parents, which darkened our understanding, weakened our will, and left in us a strong inclination to evil.

The Spots of Ink on a New Dress

Disobedience has evil effects. A lady had a handsome dress of sky-blue silk made as a present to her grown-up daughter at Christmas. On Christmas eve the tailor brought it home. The young lady tried it on at once, to see if it was properly made. To her satisfaction and that of every one else, it was found to fit perfectly. The lady paid the bill, and said to her daughter: "Go into the next room and bring a glass of red wine for the tailor. But mind you strike a light before you pour it out." The girl went at once to do her mother's bidding and soon returned with a glass of wine which she handed to the man. He raised the glass to his lips and took a good mouthful, but quickly spat it all out again. Lo and behold! The grand new dress was sprinkled with hideous spots of ink! The girl had

not taken the trouble to do as her mother told her, and strike a light in the adjoining room; hence it came about that she took the wrong bottle, and brought a glass of ink instead of wine. She got thoroughly scolded by her mother for her disobedience, and all the next year no new frock was given her. It was through disobedience that our first parents stained the robe of their primeval innocence.

Q. What is the sin called which we inherit from our first parents?

A. The sin which we inherit from our first parents is called original sin.

The Spring and the Stream

Two students were enjoying a holiday in the woods, and as they wandered along, they discoursed of original sin. "We cannot understand," said one, "how original sin is transmitted." "We cannot fully understand it," admitted the other, "but we can at least form some idea of this truth." As he was just then standing by a small spring, he stirred up the muddy bottom with his stick and watched the change that came over the appearance of the stream. "There," he said, "our corrupted nature is like this spring and stream, except that human nature is not purified by motion and transmission."

Q. Why is this sin called original?

A. This sin is called original because it comes down to us from our first parents, and we are brought into the world with its guilt on our soul.

The Neglected Pupil

The teacher of a Sunday school class propounded the foregoing question to a new pupil. The child in question, though bright enough, had been neglected by her parents, and it was only through means of some other pupils that she was led to come to church at all. Looking only to the meaning of the words she answered: "It is called original because it was a new kind of sin invented and committed then for the first time." When asked, "What are capital sins?" she reflected, "When papa approves of anything, he says, 'Capital! that's capital!'" and so she answered: "A capital sin is a good sin." We see herein the evil of neglect on the part of parents, and the necessity of religious instruction.

Q. Does this corruption of our nature remain in us after original sin is forgiven?

A. This corruption of our nature and other punishments remain in us after original sin is forgiven.

The Face of Socrates

We are all born with an inclination to evil rather than to good, and this is in consequence of original sin; but we can and should practice that self-correction in which virtue properly consists. A physiognomist, after a study of Socrates' face, decided he was a man inclined to lewdness, anger, drunkenness, and many other vices. His disciples were indignant, but the philosopher (he lived in Greece four hundred years before Christ) stopped them, saying candidly: "Keep

quiet; the man is quite right, for I would actually be what he says I am, did I not apply myself to the study of philosophy and the practice of virtue." If a heathen by natural means can so overcome his evil inclinations, how much more in this respect can and should Christians accomplish by grace!

Q. Was any one ever preserved from original sin?

A. The Blessed Virgin Mary, through the merits of her Divine Son, was preserved free from the guilt of original sin, and this privilege is called her Immaculate Conception.

The Apparition at Lourdes

Even at the present day apparitions take place in order to corroborate the truth of our religion. In the south of France, there is a small town called Lourdes, situated at the foot of the Pyrenees. In the year 1858, that is, four years after the promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the Mother of God appeared there no less than eighteen times. The following is an account of how she was seen by Bernadette Soubirous, a girl fourteen years old, the child of poor parents, who had brought her up piously and taught her to say the rosary. This she often did when keeping sheep on the hills. About midday on the 11th of February, 1858, Bernadette went with some other girls to pick up sticks on the banks of the river Gave, which flows at the foot of the mountains. While the Angelus was being rung from the church tower, she saw in a niche in the rocks on the other side of the river the

figure of a woman, surrounded by a halo of brilliant light. She was clothed in a white robe, with a blue girdle round her waist and a long white veil on her head, while from her right arm there hung a rosary formed of white beads, the cross being of gold. This lady was most beautiful to behold, and she smiled kindly and sweetly on the child. Bernadette fell on her knees and tried to tell her beads, but she was so much frightened that she could not even make the sign of the cross. Seeing this, the lady made the sign of the cross herself. Then the child, taking courage, blessed herself and recited the rosary all through. When she had finished, the apparition suddenly vanished, just as a flame goes out. Bernadette told her companions what she had seen, and when she got home, she told her mother also. The next Sunday the girl went with her companions to the same spot, taking some holy water with her. Scarcely had she begun to say her beads when the same figure appeared again. This time Bernadette sprinkled some holy water in the direction of the place where the apparition stood; but instead of disappearing, the lady smiled benignantly, bowed her head, and approached somewhat nearer. The other children saw nothing extraordinary, they only noticed that Bernadette's countenance beamed with delight. When the child went to the grotto for the third time she was accompanied by two women. On this occasion the shining figure expressed the wish that Bernadette should come thither daily for a fortnight, and that a great many people should come with her. Accordingly, when the apparition again

took place, several hundred people were present; later on they might be counted by thousands. The girl passed through the crowd of spectators with a perfectly unassuming yet unembarrassed demeanor. No one but herself saw the apparition, yet every one observed that at the time she was rapt in ecstasy. Once a doctor held a lighted taper under her hand, but she did not move a muscle, and evidently felt no pain. He made the same experiment when the apparition had disappeared; she then screamed with pain. Twice during this period the figure failed to appear; then Bernadette returned home sorrowful and in tears. The priest of the place did not interfere at all in the matter; yet the enemies of religion declared that it was a fraud, concocted by wily priests. The girl was taken to the police station and examined by a magistrate; but there was no ground for arresting her, so she was discharged. On one of the occasions, whereon Our Lady appeared clothed in light, she said to her: "Go and tell the priest that it is my will that a church should be erected here to which the people shall come in procession." Bernadette accordingly went to the parish priest and delivered the message. He bade her tell the lady first of all to give a proof of her power, and let that proof be making the rosebush at her feet come into leaf and blossom in the winter. The next time the lady appeared, Bernadette did as she was desired; but the lady did not comply with the request; her reply was: "Penance, penance, penance!" Somewhat later she said to the girl, "Drink some of the water of this spring, and wash yourself in it." The child put her

hands down to the spot indicated to find the spring, and the water came welling up out of the dry ground with ever increasing velocity, and from that time forth the source has yielded eighty-five gallons a minute. This water, which in appearance differs nothing from ordinary water, possesses miraculous healing properties; by the use of it, countless supernatural cures have been effected and still are effected to this day. On the 25th of March, the Feast of the Annunciation, Bernadette begged the lady to tell her her name. After she had repeated her request four times the answer was given in these words, uttered by the apparition with clasped hands: "I am the Immaculate Conception." Afraid lest she should forget the words, of whose meaning she had no idea, the girl hastened to the priest and repeated them to him. After a time the grotto was closed by the police, and bereft of all its costly decorations. But the Emperor Napoleon III reversed this decree and allowed free access to the grotto to all comers. In the year 1862 a Parisian barrister named Henri Laserre, who had lost his sight, was immediately and completely cured by bathing his eyes with some of the water, for which he had sent by the advice of a Protestant friend. Out of gratitude to almighty God he traveled all over France, visiting persons who had been cured of their respective maladies at Lourdes, to collect materials for publication in a book containing an account of the miracles wrought at that spot, and entitled *Our Blessed Lady of Lourdes*. In fact, the miracles were so numerous and so striking that the bishop of the diocese was compelled to look into the

matter. He appointed a commission to investigate all the circumstances and to examine into the various cures, and not until four years had elapsed did he deliver his judgment concerning them. In the year 1862 he issued a pastoral letter, in which he solemnly acquainted the faithful of his diocese with the fact that supernatural occurrences had taken place at Lourdes, which could not be ascribed to anything other than divine omnipotence. He accordingly solicited contributions for building a church. The sum collected for this purpose amounted to two million francs, so that a magnificent sanctuary could be erected, which has become a celebrated place of pilgrimage.

In 1866 Bernadette entered the convent of the Sisters of Mercy at Nevers; before her death she solemnly stated upon oath that all that she had related concerning the supernatural apparitions at Lourdes was strictly true. Lourdes is now visited every year by millions of pilgrims from all parts of Christendom, and is a thorn in the side of the adversaries of religion. For the Catholic Church, however, the facts of the occurrences at Lourdes are most valuable, as they shed glory on our faith and afford an incontrovertible proof of the truth of our holy religion.

LESSON SIXTH

ON SIN AND ITS KINDS

Q. Is original sin the only kind of sin?

A. Original sin is not the only kind of sin; there is another kind of sin, which we commit ourselves, called actual sin.

One of the Exceptions

No man is without sin. Many individuals in the pride of their hearts imagine themselves free from sin, because they do not steal, or murder, or commit any crime for which society would condemn them. Once, in the presence of others, a gentleman said to the parish priest: "I never go to confession, Father; I really have no sins to confess." "Since you never commit sin, you belong to the exceptions," the father replied. "To what exceptions do I belong? Do you count me with the saints?" the man inquired. He left the priest no peace until told what was meant, but first he had to give his word of honor that he would not take offense at the answer. Then the priest said: "I will tell you who are the people who never sin: children who have not attained the age of reason, and idiots, or madmen who have lost their reason." After this nothing more was said on religious topics. Seeing that man is as frail spiritually as he is corporally, no one can possibly venture to assert that he is without sin.

Q. What is actual sin?

A. Actual sin is any wilful thought, word, deed, or omission contrary to the law of God.

When will there be War again?

The sins of nations are followed by national calamities. In the year 1870, as is well known, France and Germany were at war. On the conclusion of hostilities, when the German army evacuated France, a French officer contemptuously asked a German officer, when another invasion might be looked for. He answered: "That will probably be when the sins of France are greater than those of Germany." Nations are punished in time by temporal misery.

Q. How many kinds of actual sin are there?

A. There are two kinds of actual sin — mortal and venial.

An Artificer is Instrumental in his Own Death

We ought not to take part in reprehensible transactions. Phelaris, the tyrant of Agrigentum, once commissioned an artificer to cast a metal bull of which the body should be hollow, so that if a man were shut up in it and a fire lighted underneath, he should be slowly burned to death. Accordingly the worker in metals manufactured this instrument of torture, and fashioned it in such a manner that it should bellow horribly if the unhappy victim inclosed within it uttered cries or groans. The first individual

condemned by the tyrant to suffer this cruel death was the artificer who had made the ox of bronze. Those who heard this said, "That man was burned in the fire he kindled;" that is to say, he was to blame for his own misfortune because he provided the king with the means of torturing others.

Q. What is mortal sin?

A. Mortal sin is a grievous offense against the law of God.

The Biter Bitten

A brigand once concealed himself behind a thicket, lying in wait with a gun in his hand for a wealthy merchant who was to pass that way. When he heard his intended victim approaching, the robber dropped on one knee, in order to take better aim. Unwittingly he knelt upon a snake that was hidden beneath the dry leaves. The infuriated reptile sprang up and coiled itself round the arm and neck of the robber, who fired but missed his aim. On hearing his agonized cry, for the snake had already bitten him, the merchant hastened up. "Alas!" groaned the brigand, "it serves me right. At the very moment when I thought to take your life, I meet my own death." So it is with mortal sin; at the very moment we are guilty of it, the serpent of hell causes the death of our soul.

Q. Why is this sin called mortal?

A. This sin is called mortal because it deprives us of spiritual life, which is sanctifying grace, and brings everlasting death and damnation on the soul.

Rudolph of Hapsburg Refuses to Drink Water Taken from the Thirsty

The oppression of the poor and helpless is a sin so grievous that it even cries to Heaven for vengeance. In the year 1278 Rudolph of Hapsburg, the German emperor, was at war with Ottocar, the king of Bohemia. He defeated him in a pitched battle near Jedenspengen. At that time, in consequence of the great heat that prevailed, all the springs were dried up; the Emperor Rudolph suffered extremely from thirst, and no water could be got for him. Then two horse-soldiers rode to a distance in search of water for their emperor. At length they came upon a party of reapers who were taking their midday meal, with a large pitcher of water beside them. The imperial soldiers begged for the water, but the harvest-men would not give it to them, for it was scarce and they were very thirsty. Then the soldiers drew their swords and threatened to put the reapers to death if they refused to give it up. Trembling with alarm, the men reluctantly yielded, and the horsemen rode away in triumph with the pitcher of water. Joyfully they carried it to the emperor, and told him how they had obtained it. The monarch was just raising the pitcher to his parched lips when he heard the story; immediately he set it down, saying: "I will not quench my thirst with water of which the poor have been robbed. Go and take what belongs to the poor back to them." The soldiers were obliged to obey their royal master's behest, and restore to the reapers the water of which

they had been forcibly deprived. Many a rich man in the present day, who takes advantage of the poor for his own profit, might learn a lesson from the generous Emperor Rudolph.

Q. How many things are necessary to make a sin mortal?

A. To make a sin mortal, three things are necessary: a grievous matter, sufficient reflection, and full consent of the will.

The Lady who would not Pay the Dressmaker

Defrauding laborers of their wages is a sin that cries to Heaven. The following incident which occurred in Dresden, was reported in the newspapers. The daughter of a wealthy landed proprietor was married to a government official of high rank. On becoming "my lady," she had a grand trousseau and many expensive dresses. Amongst other workwomen she employed a poor seamstress, who had a sick husband and eight children to support. When this woman, who was an able dress maker, brought home the gowns she had made, the lady praised her work and promised she would give her more in future, but she did not say a word about paying her. Weeks went by, and the poor woman did not get her money. Presently, when they were in great distress, she sent her eldest boy with the account to the lady. The boy, however, came back crying, having been scolded for his impudence, and brought no money. A few days later

the lady's husband came home in high displeasure. She asked him what was the matter. He told her that her dressmaker's eldest boy had been taken up for stealing a loaf of bread. "When brought before the magistrate," he said, "the boy put all the blame on you, because you had so long withheld payment from the family when they were starving." Needless to add that the bill was paid immediately, and the lady never kept working-people without their money again. Hence, we see that those who withhold from servants and working-people the wages due to them are responsible, not only for the temporal misery they bring on them, but also for whatever wrongdoing may possibly ensue.

Q. What is venial sin?

A. Venial sin is a slight offense against the law of God in matters of less importance, or in matters of great importance it is an offense committed without sufficient reflection or full consent of the will.

The Little Winebibber

St. Augustine relates that his mother, St. Monica, when still but a mere child, allowed herself to fall into an inordinate liking for wine. It seems that whenever her parents sent her to draw wine from the cellar she would put her lips to the pitcher and take a sip. By and by this trifling habit developed into a serious passion, and it was not until one day, when a servant, who usually accompanied her to the cellar, reproached her, in a fit of anger, with being a winebibber that St. Monica was aroused to her

danger and inspired to correct herself, which she soon did. Single drops of deadly poison may be harmless, but if taken steadily they will kill. Dropping water will wear away even stones, and so, too, venial sins wear out our good resolutions.

Q. Which are the effects of venial sin?

A. The effects of venial sin are the lessening of the love of God in our heart, the making us less worthy of His help, and the weakening of the power to resist mortal sin.

The Bear and the Honey

Indulgence in venial sins weakens the will. A certain prince gave an entertainment to which he invited several persons of rank. After a sumptuous repast he took his guests on to a balcony overlooking the courtyard in which stood a caldron of boiling honey. Into this courtyard a bear was suddenly let loose. As soon as it smelled the honey, it rushed up to the caldron and burned its muzzle terribly. Roaring with pain, it fled to the opposite end of the yard. But after a while it came near and began to lick up the honey. It was still too hot; the bear burned its tongue and again retreated to a distance, yet not so far as before. Once or twice it came up and tried again; finally it devoured all the honey with such greediness that it burst. Thus it is with a man who is addicted to vice. When the evil consequences of his misdeeds make themselves felt, the sinner forms excellent resolutions, but presently he relapses again into sin. The more

often he sins, the less able he becomes to withstand temptation. At last he is ruined, both for time and for eternity.

Q. Which are the chief sources of sin?

A. The chief sources of sin are seven: Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy, and Sloth; and they are commonly called capital sins.

PRIDE

THE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNT

Since work is no disgrace, no one ought to be treated with contempt because he either does, or formerly did, earn his bread with the labor of his hands. One of the kings of Sweden invited a leading member of the House of Commons to dinner, in the hope of thereby gaining his vote on behalf of a project (the extension of a fortress) that he had formed. Now this man had formerly been engaged in the shoemaking trade, and when he took his seat at the royal table, he found himself next to a count, who prided himself on his rank. Presently the count, addressing his neighbor, said: "Is it true, sir, that you once were a shoemaker?" "Yes, it is quite true," was the reply; "but you, count, never were one?" "What do you mean by asking me such a question?" said the count, flushing with anger. The deputy, who was quick at repartee, rejoined: "I meant this: if you had ever been a shoemaker, you would certainly have remained one to the end of your days." The count bit his lips,

but the king, who overheard the conversation, laughed heartily, and said the count richly deserved the snub.

THANKS FOR A GRINDSTONE

The poor can often help the rich in time of need. A poor countryman had to deliver several loads of wood at a large manufactory. When he brought his wagon into the courtyard of the factory, he noticed that the workmen had put up a new grindstone and rolled the old one into a corner. On the wagoner's going to the master to receive payment for the wood, he asked if he might have the old grindstone. The manufacturer replied that he was welcome to take it, if only to get it out of the way. The man thanked him very heartily, and said it might, perhaps, be in his power to show the gentleman a civility. But at this the manufacturer got angry, and said, proudly : "I want no civilities from you ; if I require your services, I shall pay you for them." The man went his way in silence, and took the coveted grindstone away with him. As often as he used it, he thought of what the rich man had said, and prayed God to give him some occasion of repaying him for the benefit he had conferred on him. The wished-for opportunity soon presented itself. One Sunday, when the countryman was on his way to church, he saw a carriage coming along the road at a mad gallop. The horses had taken fright, and the coachman had fallen from his seat. In the carriage the wealthy manufacturer was seated with his family, crying aloud for help. The countryman did

not hesitate a moment; wrenching the hand-rail from a wooden bridge, he placed it across the road to stop the horses; and when they came up he sprang forward, seized the bridle, and with a strong hand forced them to come to a standstill. The master alighted, and taking out his purse, was going to reward the brave countryman. But the latter said: "Such services are not to be paid for with money. This is the return I make you for the old grindstone which you gave me." This story shows us that we ought not to despise any one. We never know how we may need the services of the poorest and the humblest.

COVETOUSNESS

THE SUPPOSED POSSESSOR OF $50,000

Those who support their parents from selfish motives have no merit in God's sight. A rich manufacturer had two daughters, both of whom he married very well, giving them a splendid trousseau and ample dowry. But as they knew that he still had considerable property they begged him to divide it between them, promising that they would each provide for him in turn. The father was so foolish as to yield to them and part with all his fortune. He was soon made to repent of his weak compliance with their request, for they kept him like a beggar. The unfortunate man told his story to an old friend, himself a man of large means, and asked his advice. This friend at once gave him a bank-note, telling him to order an elaborate dinner and invite his daughters and their husbands, besides a select party of friends.

He lent him besides, the sum of $50,000, telling him he would send a trusty messenger, while the dinner was going on, to fetch it. Accordingly, while the guests were at table, a liveried servant appeared with a note, requesting the master of the house to lend his friend that amount for three days. The host, apologizing for attending to urgent business, left the table, and taking the roll of notes from an iron safe, counted them out before the assembled company before intrusting them to the servant. His daughters and sons-in-law were astonished. From that time forth they totally changed their behavior to their father; his daughters vied with each other in their attentions to him. When he died, the safe from which he took the money was opened; they expected a rich legacy. To their amazement only a few stones were found in it, and a paper whereon were these words: "That man is a fool who divides his property between his children during his lifetime."

THE MISER WHO BURNED HIS NOTES

The miser is his own worst enemy. A certain miser, who grudged himself the bare necessaries of life, was seriously ill. As he grew worse and worse, he was at length prevailed upon to have medical advice. The doctor diagnosed his malady and declared that he had at most three days to live. He exhorted him to send for the priest and prepare for death. When he had gone, the miser did not follow his advice and summon the priest; he got out of bed and taking a quantity of bank-notes and bonds, he put them in the fireplace and set fire to them. He did

not wish any one to inherit his property. Then he went back to bed. When the doctor came the next day, he found his patient had taken an unexpected turn for the better. On hearing this, the miser was aghast, thinking of what he had done. He did, in fact, recover wonderfully soon, and the money which he had remaining did not last long. In a few weeks' time he had to beg his bread. Thus he had been his own worst enemy.

LUST

THE TEMPTATION OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

St. Thomas in his youth was bent on embracing the religious state, but his people opposed the idea. They even went so far as to employ a dissolute woman to make an attempt on his virtue. No sooner had she entered his apartment than the holy youth snatched up a red-hot poker and sent her screaming from the room. Kneeling down then he thanked God and renewed his vow of perpetual chastity. Presently he fell into a deep sleep, and in a dream beheld two angels approach and bind him about the loins with a cincture. From that time forth he was free from all impure temptations. Every temptation we reject we are made stronger against the next assault.

ANGER

THE SULTAN WHO WANTED TO PUT HIS OFFICERS TO DEATH

Anger makes a man blind to reason. A Turkish sultan, Bajazet, while carrying on war with the

Tartars, was highly displeased with the officers of his army. He held a council of war and concluded that nothing short of putting them all to death would be sufficient punishment. His ministers were in great consternation at this decision, and knew not what to do. The court jester helped them out of the dilemma. He said to the sultan: "You are quite right. The officers richly deserve to be beheaded. Then we shall have no cause for alarm. You shall take the standard, and I will strap the drum round my shoulders. We two shall be able to vanquish the enemy without any one's help." This speech brought the sultan to his senses; his anger melted away and he forgave the officers. One who is angry does not consider the consequences of his actions.

THE SHEPHERD AND THE RAM

Anger is a bad counsellor. A shepherd boy was guarding a flock of sheep in a mountainous region. One day while sitting on a rock he fell asleep, and kept nodding his head. The ram, which was close by, thought the shepherd was challenging him to a wrestling match, so he took a run and butted him with his horns. The boy, awakened from his slumbers in so ungentle a fashion, was in a great rage; in his anger he seized the ram by the horns and flung it to a distance. The animal fell backward and was precipitated down a steep declivity. The sheep — about a hundred in number — followed the ram and also fell headlong into the abyss. The shepherd tore his hair in despair, but what good did that do? The

mischief done could not be repaired. Repentance comes too late for actions done in a moment of anger.

PLATO AND THE NAUGHTY BOY

Plato the philosopher had occasion to chastise a bad boy. But as he was very much enraged on account of the culprit's misdeeds, he begged his friend Xenocrates to undertake the chastisement for him. "Be so good," he said to him, "as to give the boy a sound flogging; I dare not do it myself, I am too angry with him."

GLUTTONY

AN INDIAN CHIEF ON DRUNKENNESS

Father de Smet, the Jesuit missionary of the North American Indians, praises the tribe called Ravens for their opposition to the introduction among them of intoxicating liquors. "What good is this fire-water?" said their chief. "It burns the throat and stomach; it makes a man a bear; when he has drunk he bites, grunts, howls, and ends by falling down like a corpse. Your fire-water is evil; give it to our enemies; they will kill one another, and their wives and children will be objects of pity. As for us, we need it not; we are mad enough without it." Excessive indulgence in intoxicants, if not the greatest, is one of the very greatest evils of this age.

ENVY

THE TWO MERCHANTS

Envy is overcome by benefits. The shops of two tradesmen who were in the same branch of business

were situated opposite to each other. Two of a trade, the proverb says, do not agree ; and so it was in this instance. Jealousy of each other caused them to become open enemies. Now one of the two felt pangs of conscience ; he knew the sentiments he entertained toward his neighbor were highly reprehensible. He went to a priest, and asked him what he should do to propitiate his adversary. The priest replied: "You can take no better course than this : whenever you have not the article required by your customers send them over the way to your neighbor." The man followed this advice. The other tradesman soon learned who it was who sent customers to him, and on the first opportunity he took occasion to thank him. Thus the two were reconciled and lived on the best of terms with each other. As the sun's rays melt ice, so benefits dispel jealousy.

SLOTH

CHARLEMAGNE'S DAUGHTERS

Every one is bound to work. Charlemagne was one of the most famous monarchs that ever lived. He was not only an able ruler, but an exemplary father. He made all his daughters learn some kind of household work, — work which is usually performed by women ; they had to sew, to spin, and even to wash and cook. The emperor himself would only wear linen which his daughters had spun, clothes which their deft fingers had made. Thus by the example of his own domestic arrangements he taught his subjects that not only is it no disgrace to work,

but it is a duty incumbent on every one. Charlemagne's daughters would put to shame many of the young ladies of the present day.

A CURE FOR THE SLUGGARD

Sloth here leads to misery hereafter. In Holland long ago in early times people who would not work were subjected to the following punishment: They were confined singly in a small cell, into which a stream of water constantly flowed. The occupant of the cell was forced, to save himself from being drowned, to pump the water out; for this purpose there was a handle in the wall. The amount of water that flowed into the cell was proportioned to the strength of the man who had to pump it out; and the quantity was increased every day. By this means the limbs stiffened by want of use were rendered supple, and the indolent members of society soon begged to be released from their unwelcome task, and gladly accepted less toilsome and more profitable work. In a future life the slothful will not escape the divine chastisements.

LESSON SEVENTH

ON THE INCARNATION AND REDEMPTION

Q. Did God abandon man after he fell into sin?

A. God did not abandon man after he fell into sin, but promised him a Redeemer, who was to satisfy for man's sin and reopen to him the gates of heaven.

The Generous Prince

A certain great monarch had a favorite nobleman whom he had advanced in every way. Unfortunately, in the course of time, pride so took possession of this nobleman that, not content with being second in the kingdom, he formed a conspiracy whereby he hoped to place himself upon the throne. The scheme, however, was discovered in time to defeat it, and the victim of ambition was degraded and banished. But the young crown prince, who was of a noble, compassionate disposition and loved the former favorite dearly, went to his royal father and obtained forgiveness for that unfortunate and his family. Then the noble youth set out alone and on foot, and braved the hardships of a long and trying journey so that he himself might be the first to announce the good tidings to his old friend. The joy of the poor exiles may be imagined, and also their thankfulness and life-long devotion to their

generous prince. Infinitely more than this has the Son of God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, done for us, and infinitely stronger is His claim on our lasting gratitude and love.

Q. Who is the Redeemer?

A. Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of mankind.

A Modern Pagan

There is only one true type of Christianity, and that is Catholicism. Protestantism is but a halfway house on the road to paganism. Catholics alone cling tenaciously to Christ by faith in Him, hope in Him, and love for Him. During an exhibition of paintings in a Boston art museum, a well-dressed, intelligent-looking young gentleman was seen to be studying one work with special interest. The picture was a head of the Saviour. Turning presently to a lady near him, the young man begged pardon and asked to be enlightened as to what that picture represented. "That, sir, is the Saviour, the Redeemer," she replied. "And who," he asked, "was He?" "Why, Jesus Christ, of course," she answered, with a look of astonishment. The youth noticed her wonder and blushed deeply, saying: "You will forgive me, I trust, when I assure you I have never before heard of Him." The lady, herself a Protestant, told of the incident, and said that on inquiry she found he was from one of the northern New England States, from a town whose church, for want of a minister, was closed and whose young people

were growing up in absolute ignorance of Christian truth. And, in fact, so many such towns are there that even the governor of the State lately raised his voice in solemn protest.

Q. What do you believe of Jesus Christ?

A. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, true God and true man.

The Joint Debate

Once in Armenia an heretical priest challenged a Catholic missionary to a joint debate. The missionary, though reluctant, was in a way forced to accept. The subject was the personality of the Redeemer. "I admit," said the heretic, "that Jesus Christ was God and man, but so perfectly were the divine and human natures united in Him that He had but one nature. Two pieces of iron — for example, a large and small piece — if fused together become so united as to lose their individuality." "True," replied the missionary, "but let one piece be an ingot of gold, and will the result be all gold or all iron? Will it not rather be part gold and part iron? So it is with Christ; in His single person are two distinct natures. In His human nature He suffered and died, but it was the divine nature that gave an infinite value to His sufferings and death."

Q. Why is Jesus Christ true God?

A. Jesus Christ is true God because He is the true and only Son of God the Father.

The Arian Emperor and the Crown Prince

Since Christ is the Son of God, divine worship is due to Him. It is well known that in the early ages of Christianity the Arian heresy was widely diffused. The followers of Arius asserted Christ to be the greatest and noblest of created beings, but they denied His divinity. This heresy was condemned by the Council of Nicæa, and the clause (*Christ is*), *consubstantial with the Father*, was inserted in the Creed. The Emperor Theodosius favored the Arians; accordingly a certain bishop named Amphilochius went to him with the purpose of demonstrating to him that to deny divine honors to the Son of God is to rob God the Father of glory. The bishop asked to have an audience with the emperor, at which the crown prince should also be present. On entering the royal presence he bowed low and reverently before the emperor, but only nodded to the prince, saying: "Good morning, sir." The emperor was highly incensed, and standing up, he insisted upon proper respect being shown to his son. The bishop speaking with perfect composure, said: "Behold, mighty Emperor, thou wilt not permit thy subjects to refuse to pay thy son the respect which is his due. So likewise, God the Father is displeased when man withholds divine honor from His only begotten Son. Nay, He requires us to pay Him the same homage as we pay His Father." Thereupon he saluted the imperial prince in the most respectful manner. The good bishop's words took effect; from that time forth the emperor held the Catholic faith in its integrity.

Q. Why is Jesus Christ true man?

A. Jesus Christ is true man because He is the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary and has a body and soul like ours.

King Codrus

God became man in order that He might suffer and thereby redeem us. Codrus, the king of Athens, may to a certain extent be compared to Our Lord. During his reign the realm was invaded by enemies, the Dorians. The oracle of Delphi announced that the Athenians would be victorious over their foes, if their king was slain by the enemy's hand. Hearing this, Codrus dressed as a peasant, and went into the hostile camp. There a dispute having arisen, he was killed in the fray. Now the Dorians were acquainted with the utterance of the oracle, and when they found who it was whom they had slain, terror seized on them, and they fled in dismay. So it was in Our Lord's case. The prophets had foretold that the human race would be saved through the death of the King of glory. The Son of God took upon Himself the form of a servant, the nature of man; He came into the world, was not recognized by the world, and was put to death. When the enemy of mankind saw that at his instigation the Jews had crucified the Lord of life, he fled in alarm.

Q. How many natures are there in Jesus Christ?

A. In Jesus Christ there are two natures, the nature of God and the nature of man.

St. Margaret

Christ gave proof of His divinity by His resurrection. St. Margaret, who suffered martyrdom in the year 284, was questioned by the pagan judge about the religion she professed. She answered that she was a Christian. "Oh, how utterly foolish it is," the judge exclaimed, "to worship a man as if he were a god, — and such a man, too, who died the shameful death of the cross!" "Why do you always dwell upon the crucifixion of Christ and never speak of His resurrection?" Margaret rejoined. "His passion and death do, it is true, prove that He was man; His resurrection, on the other hand, proves Him to be God."

Q. Is Jesus Christ more than one Person?
A. No, Jesus Christ is but one Divine Person.

The Divine Maternity of Mary

The whole doctrine of Christianity depends on the truth of the Incarnation, — that is, that in the single person of Jesus Christ the divine and human natures were united. The value of all His words and works, of all His teaching and example, of His life and sufferings and death, depend on the fact that He, one person, was both God and man. And that is why no other doctrine has been so much insisted on and so much assailed. Even in the time of the apostles, some heretics taught that Christ was not God; others, that he was God but not man; others, that His body was only a body in appearance; others,

that He took possession of His body after its birth, and left it before its death; others, that in Him there were two persons, etc. "I don't see," said a Protestant to a Catholic friend, "why you Catholics make such a fuss over your devotion to the Virgin." "It is," was the reply, "because 'Mary, the Mother of God,' is the most fundamental dogma of our faith." And such, in truth, it is. Eve sought to make Adam equal to God: but to the new Eve, Mary, it fell to make man God Himself.

Q. Was Jesus Christ always God?

A. Jesus Christ was always God, as He is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, equal to His Father from all eternity.

The Word of God

"A word," says the dictionary, "is a sign expressing an idea." Thus a word may be either oral or written, and it may even be a picture such as the hieroglyphics of the ancients. The human eye forms a word, or sensible picture, of the object seen, and the mind from this sensible word forms an intellectual word or representation of the same object. It is thus we examine and admire things and study the different ways in which our ideas may be modified and imitated in the material world. So, too, God contemplating His own divine essence forms a word, — the Word of God, the second Person of the Trinity, in whom all things had their first ideal existence; who though distinct from God, is God Himself since falling within

the radius of the Divinity, and who was always God, for with God, to be and to know are simultaneous.

Q. Was Jesus Christ always man?

A. Jesus Christ was not always man, but became man at the time of His Incarnation.

The Test of the Angels

It is believed that when God created the angels and wished, before admitting them to the everlasting joys of heaven, to test their obedience, He revealed to them the future humanity of His only begotten Son and bade them all fall down and adore. Lucifer and his followers, pure spirits as they were, disdained to worship a soul clothed with a mortal body, and so were cast into hell.

Q. What do you mean by the Incarnation?

A. By the Incarnation I mean that the Son of God was made man.

The Iron and the Wood

A saintly hermit and his disciple, whom he called his son, were building a house for themselves on the bank of a river. Presently, when the young man swung his ax, the head flew from the handle and sank in the stream. The youth cried out in dismay, for the ax was his only tool and was borrowed as well. Then his father, taking a log of wood, cast it into the river, and lo! the wood sank, and in proportion as it went down the iron rose and finally appeared

and floated to the shore. That iron represents our human nature which tends to sink to the depths and stick fast in the mire of iniquity. God meant it to build for itself an eternal habitation in heaven, but it fell and sank. Then the Father cast His Son — the wood of the root of Jesse — into the stream of time, and lo! according as He sank into His humble earthly existence and the degradation of His passion and death, so our nature was raised up and restored to its original purpose, viz. to construct for itself — wielded by the Son — a heavenly mansion.

Q. How was the Son of God made man?

A. The Son of God was conceived and made man by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Holy House of Nazareth

The Blessed Virgin's home at Nazareth, in which the Annunciation took place, no longer stands in that town; in the year 1294 it was miraculously conveyed to Loretto in Italy. Its site in Nazareth lies within the limits of the Franciscan convent. An altar graces the spot whereon the Incarnation was accomplished, and on the marble floor is this inscription: *Verbum caro hic factum est.* (Here the Word was made flesh.) The house was miraculously conveyed through the air to Loretto, to avoid desecration, and there it rests without any visible foundation, the shrine of millions of pilgrims and thousands of miracles.

Q. Is the Blessed Virgin Mary truly the Mother of God?

A. The Blessed Virgin Mary is truly the Mother of God, because the same Divine Person who is the Son of God is also the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Catholic Waif and the Protestant Bishop

In a London charity-school a Protestant bishop and several other Anglican clergymen were hearing the waifs recite their prayers. Among them was a Catholic lad. This latter, having said the "Our Father," etc., began, as he had been taught, to recite the "Hail Mary"; but the bishop interposed hastily, saying: "No, no! we want to hear nothing about her. Go on to the next." The lad then began the "Apostles' Creed"; but when he arrived at "was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the —" he stopped, and looking up said, "Now, what am I to do, sir, for here she comes again." And so it is, indeed, for the Virgin is as irrevocably bound up with our Redemption and our religion as is a loving mother with the existence and the fortunes of her children.

Pius X. in his very first message to the world mentions Mary as "participating in all mysteries and dispensing every grace."

Q. Did the Son of God become man immediately after the sin of our first parents?

A. The Son of God did not become man immediately after the sin of our first parents, but was promised to them as a Redeemer.

God Moves Slowly

A certain infidel based his denial of the existence of God on the fact that if God existed He would not delay in punishing the world's great sinners. "Even my poor sense of justice would demand vengeance on their guilty heads, and that, too, immediately," he said in arguing with a Christian friend; "and if your God exists, surely His sense of justice ought to be keener than mine." "Yes," his friend rejoined, "but you and I are in a hurry because we feel that time — a short space of time — is the limit of our existence, but God can afford to take His time in the exercise of both His justice and His mercy, because the measure of His being is eternity."

Q. How could they be saved who lived before the Son of God became man?

A. They who lived before the Son of God became man could be saved by believing in a Redeemer to come, and by keeping the Commandments.

The Fruit of the Promised Land

Moses, while still with the Israelites in the desert, sent two spies to view the Promised Land. On their return from their tour of investigation, they brought back in proof of the land's richness an immense bunch of grapes strung on a pole and so carried between them, one preceding, the other following. That cluster of grapes represents Christ on the cross; and he that went before personifies the saints of old, and he that followed typifies those who

came after Christ. Thus the virtue of the cross touches each, and Christ's sweetness and refreshing grace are ever ready to their hands, though in this respect the Christian has the advantage. To the men of old, God said: "Go before Me and be perfect," but to His Christian followers Christ Himself has shown the way, and, leading, says: "Come, follow Me."

Q. On what day was the Son of God conceived and made man?

A. The Son of God was conceived and made man on Annunciation Day — the day on which the Angel Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin Mary that she was to be the Mother of God.

The Devil Expostulates

We adore the mystery of the Incarnation twice during the Mass, viz. at the words of the Creed, *Et homo factus est*, and at the *Et Verbum caro factum est*, of the last gospel. A young man while assisting at Mass neglected to genuflect at these two points, and immediately the devil with a threatening aspect appeared and said: "Ungrateful wretch! have you no sense of thankfulness? If God had only done half as much for us we would be constantly prostrate before Him adoring and thanking Him."

Q. On what day was Christ born?

A. Christ was born on Christmas Day, in a stable at Bethlehem, nineteen hundred years ago.

A Study in Dates

Previous to the coming of Christ, time was reckoned A.U.C., — that is, *Ab urbe condita*, or in English, "From the building of the city" (Rome); but since Christ's time we compute the years as A.D., *Anno Domini*, or "year of the Lord." The years 754 A.U.C. and 1 A.D. coincide. But it is most probable that Christ was born on December 25, 747 A.U.C., or six years previous to the opening of what we call the Christian era. He certainly was not born later than 750 A.U.C., for St. Matthew says He was born during the reign of Herod the Great, and Herod, we know, died in 750 A.U.C. Neither was He born previous to 746 A.U.C., for all the early writers tell us He was born in time of peace, and the only period of peace about that time began in 746, and lasted six years. That He was born in 747 A.U.C. is highly probable from the fact that the census spoken of in the Gospel was made by Sentius Sauterninus, proprætor of Syria, in his last year of office; and he, we know, held office from 744 A.U.C. to the beginning of the year 748 A.U.C. Hence Christ was born December 25, 747 A.U.C., or six years before the opening of our present calendar.

Q. How long did Christ live on earth?

A. Christ lived on earth about thirty-three years, and led a most holy life in poverty and suffering.

Our Lord's Age

It being most probable that Our Lord was born on December 25, 747 A.U.C., and, as we shall see

later, it being equally probable that the crucifixion took place on March 24 (Friday), 782 A.U.C., or 29 A.D., therefore, Our Saviour's age at the time of His death was exactly thirty-three years and three months.

Q. Why did Christ live so long on earth?

A. Christ lived so long on earth to show us the way to heaven by His teachings and example.

The Disciple of Zeno

Christ taught by word and example, and thus showed us the necessity of reducing to practice what we learn. In the order of virtue, an ounce of practice is worth tons of pure theory. A youth, who had been sent to the famous Greek philosopher Zeno to finish his studies, was asked by his father on his return home, "Well, what hast thou learned?" "Thou shalt see presently," the young man answered, and added not another word. His father, thinking his silence to be an evidence of stupidity or neglect of study, abused him roundly, saying: "This, forsooth, is the result of all the expense I have been to." Then noticing the youth's patience and submission to it all, he inquired: "What means this silence, sir?" "That," replied the youth, "is what Zeno taught me."

LESSON EIGHTH

ON OUR LORD'S PASSION, DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION

Q. What did Jesus Christ suffer?

A. Jesus Christ suffered a bloody sweat, a cruel scourging, was crowned with thorns, and was crucified.

The Sick Child and the Bitter Medicine

The contemplation of Christ's sufferings should enable us to bear our own trials more patiently. A child who was very ill had to take a peculiarly nauseous medicine. He took it once, but refused to take it a second time. Then his mother brought a picture of Our Lord in the Garden of Olives and the angel offering the chalice to Him. "Look," she said to the sick child, "Our Saviour drank the chalice of suffering not for His own sake, but for yours, and you will not drink your physic for your own sake. At least take it for the love of Christ." "Very well, then, for the love of Our Lord Jesus," the child rejoined, and swallowed the bitter potion without a murmur. We, too, should find it easier to bear our sufferings if we fixed our eyes on our suffering Lord.

Q. On what day did Christ die?

A. Christ died on Good Friday.

The First Good Friday

The first Good Friday most probably fell on Friday the 24th of March, 782 A.U.C., — that is, 29 A.D. Tertullian and Lactantius, writing within a century of the event, say: "The Jews crucified Christ on the seventh day before the Kalends of April (March 24th), in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, and in the consulship of the two Gemini." From the history of pagan Rome, it is known for certain that Rubellius and Fucius Geminus were consuls in the year 782 A.U.C. or 29 A.D.

Q. Why do you call that day "good" on which Christ died so sorrowful a death?

A. We call that day good on which Christ died because by His death He showed His great love for man, and purchased for him every blessing.

St. Andrew the Apostle

St. Andrew, brother of St. Peter and the first apostle called, also suffered death by crucifixion. It is related that when he was led out to die and saw the cross, he cried out: "O precious cross, that hast been consecrated by the body of my Lord, and adorned with His limbs as with rich jewels, receive me into thy arms, and present me to my Master, that He, who redeemed me *on* thee, may receive me *by* thee!"

Q. Where did Christ die?

A. Christ died on Mount Calvary.

The Rocks of Calvary

The rocks on Mount Calvary, the Gospel relates, were rent asunder at the death of Christ. A learned English professor, a free-thinker, who, though he demanded submission on the part of his pupils, would not himself admit any truth of religion without proof, was making a tour of Palestine, and hearing of the fissures in the rocks of Calvary went to see and to ridicule such evidence. But when he saw that, instead of following the natural divisions of the soil, as is usual in convulsions of the earth, they on the contrary follow the most oblique directions, he was staggered, and said: "I begin to be a Christian. I have made a profound study of mathematics and physics, and I see clearly that these rents are the result of no ordinary earthquake, and I thank God for having brought me here to contemplate this monument of His power, and this lasting proof of Christ's divinity."

Q. How did Christ die?

A. Christ was nailed to the Cross, and died on it between two thieves.

The Good Thief

A pious tradition has it that during the flight into Egypt, the Holy Family was attacked by these two robbers, who, when they found no booty in prospect, were for murdering their helpless victims. One of them, however, struck by the beauty of the child Jesus, was moved to pity, and fought off his more

savage companion. This story, whether true or imaginary, serves at least to illustrate the fact that even the worst sinners are sometimes the subject of virtuous impulses, and that if these good tendencies, however trifling, be yielded to, they will not be overlooked by our merciful Saviour, but will eventually gain for their authors the precious grace of repentance.

Q. Why did Christ suffer and die?
A. Christ suffered and died for our sins.

The Buried Seed

A little city girl was one springtime visiting her country cousins, and seeing the laborers in the field planting the seed, she cried out: "Oh, what a foolish thing! to bury the beautiful seed in the earth to rot and die!" The farmer smiled and said: "Yes; but if we don't bury it, we shall have no fine fields of corn this summer, nor abundant harvest in the fall." This law of nature is also the law of grace. Whoever humbleth himself shall be exalted. So, too, Christ's voluntary degradation was the cause of our exaltation. He Himself expressed this truth when He said: "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Q. What lessons do we learn from the sufferings and death of Christ?

A. From the sufferings and death of Christ we learn the great evil of sin, the hatred God bears to it, and the necessity of satisfying for it.

The Disappointed Philosopher

Unselfish self-sacrifice in behalf of others even unto death, is one of the surest credentials of God's ambassadors. A member of the French Directory, whose name was Lepaux, had, after puzzling his brains for a long time, devised a new religion which he called *Philanthropy* (the modern altruism), but he could gain no disciples. One day he complained of his want of success to Talleyrand, the well-known statesman. "I am not the least surprised at your failure," the latter replied. "If you wish for success, go and work miracles; heal the sick, restore life to the dead; let yourself be crucified and buried, and rise again on the third day. Do this, and take my word for it, all the world will run after you." The philosopher saw the truth of this, and went away a humbler man than he came. Messengers specially sent by God must not only work wonders, but must also be models of self-sacrifice as a confirmation of their preaching and a proof of their divine mission.

Q. Whither did Christ's soul go after His death?
A. After Christ's death His soul descended into hell.

The Finding of the True Cross

The Emperor Constantine's mother, St. Helena, although then eighty years of age, undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, with a determination to find, if possible, the true cross. She caused the profane buildings that had been erected on Calvary to be

removed, and put a band of men to work excavating. Presently they came upon three crosses and all the other instruments of the passion. It had ever been the custom of the Jews to bury the instruments of a criminal's death near the place of his execution. The difficulty now was to distinguish the cross of Our Lord from the other two. Accordingly, all three were borne in solemn procession to the home of a lady who was dangerously ill. The first and second crosses were applied to the invalid without effect, but on the third being applied, she was instantly restored to health.

Q. Did Christ's soul descend into the hell of the damned?

A. The hell into which Christ's soul descended was not the hell of the damned, but a place or state of rest called limbo, where the souls of the just were waiting for Him.

The Four States

A Catholic was conversing with several non-Catholics about the next life. "I," said one, "do not believe in a hereafter at all. When I die, that will be the end of me." "And I," said another, "believe that all men are destined to be saved, so that in my opinion the good God has only one place in store for us all, viz. heaven." "Our God is a just God," said a third, a Protestant, "and I believe that besides a heaven for the good, there is also a hell which awaits the wicked." "Gentlemen," said the Catholic, "it is only the one true Church, after all, that holds the faith in its entirety; for I believe in a heaven fo-

the good, a hell for the wicked, a purgatory as a state of preparation for heaven, and also a limbo where the souls of the just of the Old Law were detained without purgatorial pains unto the Saviour's coming."

Q. Why did Christ descend into limbo?

A. Christ descended into limbo to preach to the souls who were in prison — that is, to announce to them the joyful tidings of their Redemption.

The Protestant Dog

If Christ by the sacrifice of Himself on the cross accomplished the liberation of innumerable souls from limbo, how unreasonable it is for Protestants to deny the efficacy of the sacrifice of the Mass, which is the same sacrifice as that of the cross, in procuring the release of a soul from purgatory! A pious peasant had a faithful dog which he dearly prized and loved, and when the animal died he buried him with great care. While so engaged, a Protestant minister passing by laughed at him, and coarsely suggested that the man sing a *Libera* or recite a *De Profundis* over the grave. "I greatly regret," sighed the peasant, "that my dog was a Protestant, and did not believe in prayers for the dead; and so of course I am obliged to bury him just as your Reverence yourself will be one day interred."

Q. Where was Christ's body while His soul was in limbo?

A. While Christ's soul was in limbo His body was in the holy sepulcher.

Earth from the Holy Sepulcher

St. Augustine relates that a man named Hesperius had the misfortune to live in a haunted house. A friend who was returning from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, brought the persecuted man a little earth from the holy sepulcher. No sooner had it been sprinkled in the apartments, than the devil and his imps suddenly took their departure. So impressed with the miracle was Hesperius that he became a Catholic, and changed the house into a church. God was pleased with his piety, for at the very first Mass celebrated in the new church a paralytic young man was instantly cured.

Q. On what day did Christ rise from the dead?

A. Christ rose from the dead, glorious and immortal, on Easter Sunday, the third day after His death.

The Paschal Controversy

The first Easter Sunday fell on the 26th of March, in the year 782 A.U.C., or 29 A.D. The early Christian Church was much disturbed by a controversy as to what day was the proper one on which to celebrate the Easter festival. The dispute was waged between the Jewish converts who constituted the church in Asia Minor, on the one hand, and the rest of the Christian world, on the other. The former celebrated the crucifixion on the 14th of the month Nisan, and the resurrection on the third day following. The consequence was that Easter was oftenest celebrated on a week day. In the rest of

Christendom the custom was to celebrate the resurrection always on Sunday, and the death of Our Lord on the preceding Friday. The controversy lasted for centuries, and though attempts to settle it were made by Popes Anicetus (157–168) and Victor (191–201), it was not until the Council of Nicæa (325) that the western custom was adopted by all.

Q. How long did Christ stay on earth after His resurrection?

A. Christ stayed on earth forty days after His resurrection, to show that He was truly risen from the dead, and to instruct His apostles.

The Forty Martyrs

The number forty has been rendered sacred in various ways. The chosen people wandered forty years in the desert; Moses spent forty days on Mount Sinai ; Elias traveled forty days to Mount Horeb, and Our Lord fasted forty days in the wilderness. In one of the Roman legions were forty young Christian soldiers remarkable for their piety and courage. One day when the legion was being hard pressed by the enemy and was half dead from heat and thirst, these young men prayed God for aid, and immediately a thunder-storm broke out of a clear sky, the rain refreshing their fellow-soldiers, and the thunder and lightning putting the enemy to flight. Soon afterward the "Thundering Legion" was ordered on duty at a pagan religious service, and the forty Christians, for refusing to attend, were stripped and bound and laid side by side on a frozen lake. Night

and day they prayed that all might persevere and preserve their number forty intact, but in the middle of the night the soldier on guard saw an angel come down with thirty-nine crowns, and at the same moment one of the sufferers rolled himself over and into a hot bath which their torturers had kept handy for any who should yield. Immediately the pagan guard threw down his arms, stripped off his clothes, and announcing himself a Christian, lay down and perished with the others. Thus was their prayer answered, for the fortieth crown too had a claimant.

Q. After Christ had remained forty days on earth whither did He go?

A. After forty days Christ ascended into heaven, and the day on which He ascended into heaven is called Ascension Day.

Christ's Footsteps

It is related by the Fathers that Christ left the imprint of His sacred feet on the spot from which He ascended. St. Augustine declares that in his day, four hundred years later, they were still visible, and St. Paulinus adds that many attempts to pave over the spot had been unsuccessful. These precious relics have in all ages been visited by the faithful with the greatest veneration.

Q. Where is Christ in heaven?

A. In heaven Christ sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

The Complete Way of the Cross

St. Bernardine tells of a pious pilgrim, who, having visited in order all the consecrated places from Bethlehem to Calvary, was, on arriving at the latter place, so filled with a desire to follow his Lord still further that he threw himself on the ground with such love and fervor that his soul struggled free of his body and flew from the place of Christ's suffering to the contemplation of Him in His glory.

Q. What do you mean by saying that Christ sits at the right hand of God?

A. When I say that Christ sits at the right hand of God I mean that Christ as God is equal to His Father in all things, and that as man He is in the highest place in heaven next to God.

The Place of Honor

At every banquet the host places the guest whom he specially desires to honor at his right hand. So it was with God; on Ascension Day He said to His divine Son: "Sit Thou at My right hand till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."

LESSON NINTH

ON THE HOLY GHOST AND HIS DESCENT UPON THE APOSTLES

Q. Who is the Holy Ghost?

A. The Holy Ghost is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

St. Norbert

The Holy Spirit touches the heart of man by means of misfortune. St. Norbert was the scion of a noble race. In his youth he cared only for the pursuit of worldly pleasures. One day when he was riding from his father's castle to a neighboring village, he was overtaken by a heavy storm. The lightning fell and struck the ground just in front of his horse's head. The terrified animal threw his rider and galloped away. For more than an hour Norbert lay on the ground in a state of unconsciousness. When he came to himself, he was a changed man. He thought in his heart how ill it would have fared with him, had he then been summoned to appear before the judgment-seat of God. He gave thanks to God for having granted him time to do penance, and he resolved to amend his ways. He received Holy Orders when he was thirty years old; he then took the religious habit and journeyed through many lands preaching

penance; everywhere the vanity of earthly riches and enjoyments was the theme of his discourse. At a later period he founded the Premonstratensian Order; at the time of his death (1134) he was Archbishop of Magdeburg. His remains are interred in the monastery of Strahon, near Prague.

Q. From whom does the Holy Ghost proceed?

A. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

Errors on the Holy Ghost

The Macedonians, so called from their leader Macedonius, Patriarch of Constantinople, taught that the Holy Ghost was not God, but a creature of the same nature as the angels, though of a higher rank. Pope St. Damasus in an Œcumenical Council held at Constantinople in 381 condemned this error. To the Nicene Creed, sung on Sundays in the Mass, he caused to be added the words: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Life-giver, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified; who spoke by the prophets." Macedonius was not living at the time of the Council, having died miserably and impenitent about the year 361.

Q. Is the Holy Ghost equal to the Father and the Son?

A. The Holy Ghost is equal to the Father and the Son, being the same Lord and God as they are.

St. Francis Borgia

The Holy Spirit touches the heart of man by the sight of death. St. Francis Borgia was a duke, and for many years was attached to the court of the Emperor Charles V. The chief aim he proposed to himself was to win the favor of the Empress Isabella; he was, in fact, a great favorite with her. Now it happened that the empress was suddenly attacked by a mortal malady, and died in the bloom of her youth. Francis Borgia was commissioned by the emperor to conduct the remains of his imperial consort to Granada, where she was to be interred. On the arrival of the funeral cortège in Granada, the coffin was opened according to the prescribed usage, in order that the body might be seen by the officials, and identified as that of the late empress. But what a sight met their view! The countenance of the deceased, formerly so fair, was disfigured beyond recognition, and a horrible effluvium pervaded the vault, rendering it almost impossible for the bystanders to remain there. At that moment Francis' soul was illumined by a ray of divine grace. He said to himself: "Oh, how speedily beauty, power, and happiness vanish at a breath! What have I now for all the years that I have served my sovereign? Never again will I serve a created being whom death can take from me. Henceforth I will devote myself to the service of God alone." The next night he spent in prayer, and later on entered the Society of Jesus. After a time he was elected General of the Order. He died in the year 1572. From this instance it will be seen how

complete a transformation the grace of God can effect.

Q. *On what day did the Holy Ghost come down upon the apostles?*

A. *The Holy Ghost came down upon the apostles ten days after the Ascension of Our Lord; and the day on which He came down upon the apostles is called Whitsunday, or Pentecost.*

St. Antony the Hermit

The Holy Ghost touches the heart by the preaching of the Gospel. St. Antony was born of Egyptian parents who brought him up in the fear of God. When he was nineteen years old, his parents died, bequeathing to him a large fortune. About six months later he was one day on his way to church, when it occurred to his mind that Christ lived a life of poverty and so did His apostles, and he thought that one could serve God better in poor than in wealthy circumstances. This idea took possession of him; he could not get rid of it. At length he reached the church, and on entering it was much struck by the words of the Gospel which the priest was reading. "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." (St. Matt. xix. 21.) Antony applied these words to himself; on returning home, he resolved to sell all his vast possessions and give the proceeds to the poor. This he did, and then went into the desert, where he led an austere and saintly life. Despite all his aus

terities he lived to the age of a hundred and two years. The Holy Ghost spoke to the soul of the young man on the way to church and on his entrance into the sacred edifice.

Q. How did the Holy Ghost come down upon the apostles?

A. The Holy Ghost came down upon the apostles in the form of tongues of fire.

Speaking a Language without having Learned It

When the Holy Ghost came down upon the apostles they received the gift of tongues; that is, though they spoke in Hebrew, the men of all nations among their hearers each heard the Gospel preached in his own tongue. The same miracle has been repeated several times since, as for example, in the case of St. Vincent Ferrar, St. Anthony of Padua, and St. Francis Xavier. One day St. Dominic, on his way to Paris, received many kindnesses at the hands of some Germans, and wishing to give them in return the only thing in his possession, viz. the glad tidings of the Gospel, he prayed God fervently to enable him to address them in their own language, and immediately he received that gift, and for four days while in their company he spoke German fluently, — a language he had never learned.

Q. Who sent the Holy Ghost upon the apostles?

A. Our Lord Jesus Christ sent the Holy Ghost upon the apostles.

The Sender and the One Sent

A heretic thus argued against the divinity of the Holy Ghost: "The person sent," he said, "is always inferior to the one who sent him. A private soldier is the inferior of his commander, a servant is subordinate to his master. Now, as Christ sent the Holy Ghost, therefore the third Person of your Trinity is not God, but a mere creature. One never sends one's equal on a message." A Catholic who was present replied: "There are many ways of sending. The sun, for example, sends forth its rays, but who shall say they are by nature inferior to their source? The plant sends forth its leaves and blossoms and fruit, but all three are of an equal or even higher order than the parent stem." His refutation of the argument was quite complete, for it is false to say that to be sent always indicates inferiority.

Q. Why did Christ send the Holy Ghost?

A. Christ sent the Holy Ghost to sanctify His Church, to enlighten and strengthen the apostles, and to enable them to preach the Gospel.

An Arian Bishop in a Dilemma

God never permits wonders to be wrought in confirmation of what is not true. At the time when the Arian heresy prevailed, the Arian bishop of Carthage, Cyril, thought to deceive the inhabitants of Carthage, and by a wily stratagem make them believe that God worked miracles to prove the truth of the Arian tenets. He sent for a man who was a

stranger in the town and gave him fifty pieces of gold, on condition that he should pretend to be blind, and after the lapse of an appointed time, should beg the Arian bishop to cure him. The man took the bribe, and did as he was desired. Openly upon the market-place he solicited the bishop to work his cure. When a great crowd had collected, the bishop said in a loud voice: "To prove that we Arians hold the true faith, in the name of God I restore sight to this blind man." He bade the man open his eyes, but alas! to his astonishment and confusion, he found the feigned blindness had become real, the man had actually lost his sight. The poor fellow began to lament bitterly, and told all the bystanders how he had been bribed, and for what end. It need scarcely be said that the bishop took his departure hastily. At a subsequent time the blind man's sight was restored by the prayer and imposition of hands of St. Eugenius, the Catholic bishop of Carthage.[1]

Q. Will the Holy Ghost abide with the Church forever?

A. The Holy Ghost will abide with the Church forever, and guide it in the way of holiness and truth.

The Temple at Jerusalem

God is faithful,— that is, He always fulfills His word. God announced by the mouth of the prophets of the Old Testament that after Our Lord's death the temple at Jerusalem should be entirely destroyed, and

[1] This incident occurred in the reign of the Arian king Thrasimund.

never be rebuilt as long as the world lasted. In the year 70 A.D. the Romans overthrew the city of Jerusalem, burned the magnificent temple, and laid its walls even with the ground. Nearly three centuries later the Emperor Julian the Apostate endeavored to rebuild the temple; his design was to prove God's prediction to be false. Workmen were gathered from all parts; amongst them were a considerable number of Jews. The walls of the new structure had already attained a good height, to the gratification of the Emperor Julian and all the adversaries of Christianity, when a violent earthquake occurred which caused the walls to fall down. Thus the jubilation of the unbelievers was of short duration. However, the attempt was not abandoned; the laborers resumed their work, and the damage was soon repaired. Then another earthquake razed the edifice to the ground, and flames breaking out of the earth completed the destruction, and forced the workmen to fly to a distance. The uselessness of any further effort was evident, and to this day a heap of ruins alone marks the spot where the temple once stood. Hence we see that the word of God never fails to be fulfilled.

LESSON TENTH

ON THE EFFECTS OF THE REDEMPTION

Q. Which are the chief effects of the Redemption?

A. The chief effects of the Redemption are two: The satisfaction of God's justice by Christ's sufferings and death, and the gaining of grace for men.

The Friend in Need

A certain man had, through his own folly, incurred so large a debt that there was practically no hope of his ever being able to pay it. In the midst of his despair a generous old friend came along, and not only paid off all the debt, but went immediately and deposited a very large sum to the delinquent's credit, with the sole reservation that none could be drawn out without his indorsement. Imagine the gratitude of the poor debtor, and his lifelong devotion to his friend's interests. Now, that debtor is a figure of each of us. We were hopelessly in God's debt by sin, but our generous Saviour came, and not only canceled our liabilities, but also founded an infinite fund of merit from which, with His indorsement, — that is, by acts of faith, hope, love, and contrition, and through prayer and the Sacraments, — we may draw sufficient for all our needs unto life everlasting.

Q. What do you mean by grace?

A. By grace I mean a supernatural gift of God bestowed on us, through the merits of Jesus Christ, for our salvation.

Two Pictures

A priest was giving a stereopticon lecture to his Sunday school, and to show the natures of, and the contrast between, sin and grace, he threw on the canvas two pictures. The first was that of the Prodigal Son, filthy and emaciated, and clad in rags, and so reduced by want and hunger that he was fain to fill himself from the troughs of the hogs, whose companion and herdsman he had become. The other picture was the Prodigal again, but this time he was clothed in magnificent attire, with a look of peace and inexpressible joy on his countenance, and reclining on his dear father's bosom, while the splendid mansion in the background was gayly decorated and filled with sweet music and alive with rejoicing and the bustle of preparation for the grand banquet about to be spread in his honor. There is joy in heaven over one sinner who arises and goes to his Father and is clothed with His grace.

Q. How many kinds of grace are there?

A. There are two kinds of grace, sanctifying grace and actual grace.

The Inscription on a Gravestone

A traveler was passing through a churchyard when the following epitaph on a superb sepulchral

monument met his eye. "Here lie the remains of N. N. He died at the age of ninety years, but only lived three years." The stranger could make nothing of this singular epitaph, and asked the sexton what it meant. The man replied: "The individual who is buried there led a wicked life for eighty-seven years, but for the last three years before he died he had the fear of God before his eyes. On that account, when on his deathbed, he desired that those words should be inscribed on his tombstone." The traveler went on his way with a grave and thoughtful expression of countenance. Hence we see that there are people who are (physically) alive, yet (spiritually) dead; this comes from the fact that they are destitute of sanctifying grace.

The Buried Money

Actual grace is given us especially in the hour of temptation; and temptation is something we should always and everywhere resist. A certain town was in the time of war in danger of being plundered, and on this account many of the inhabitants sought to place their money and valuables in safety. Now in that town there were two brothers, both bachelors, living in one house; they, too, were desirous of concealing their money, for they were very rich. Consequently, one night they went out into the garden to look for a place where they could bury it. They dug a hole in which they deposited a large jar filled with gold; then they covered it up and pressed the earth firmly down. Little did they suspect that in the next garden a poor man was sitting, a day-

laborer, whom solicitude concerning the maintenance of his family had driven into solitude. Hearing a noise and whispering, he went close to the hedge and peeped through, to ascertain what was going on. He soon perceived that his two neighbors were burying their money. When they had ended their work, and had gone back into the house, the thought occurred to him that now he might become a rich man. Why should he not get the hidden treasure? A feverish excitement took possession of him; an invisible force seemed to impel him to climb over the fence and dig up the jar. Then the thought struck him: "God has said, 'Thou shalt not steal.' And when I was a boy, my father said to me a hundred times, 'Honesty is the best policy.'" But as in answer a voice whispered to him: "No one sees you; you will never be suspected. It will not take you many minutes. Do not take all the gold; but even if you were to take it all, your neighbors would still be rich men, and you and your family would be comfortably provided for." But he said again to himself: "I know that God sees me, and He will be my judge one day. What would become of me if this theft were told against me? No, better keep honest though poor; God will not forsake me." Presently the poor laborer went into his house and lay down in bed. Yet sleep forsook his eyes; he was continually racked with wretched thoughts. As soon as the sun rose and daylight streamed through the window, he got up, dressed himself, and straightway went to his neighbor's house and knocked loudly at the door. When it was opened, he said:

"I saw you last night burying your money in the garden. That sight nearly made a thief of me. Will you have the goodness to dig up your money and hide it elsewhere, so that I may once more be at peace?" The two brothers were pleased with the honesty and uprightness evinced by the poor man; and as a recompense they obtained a better situation for him. God rewards those who resist and overcome temptation.

Q. What is sanctifying grace?

A. Sanctifying grace is that grace which makes the soul holy and pleasing to God.

The Maypole

The loss of sanctifying grace renders a man hideous in God's sight. In many localities it is customary to erect a Maypole on the first of May. A tall well-grown tree is cut down in the wood and brought to the village green. It is decorated with strips of gilt paper and all manner of tinsel and finery. The young people dance round the tree and make merry. But when the tree has stood one day in the hot sun, it loses all its beauty, in spite of its showy and glittering decorations. One day when the merry-making was over, the schoolmaster's son went to his father, and said: "Father, how is it that the Maypole already looks so withered and ugly?" His father replied: "I will tell you the reason: it is because the tree is cut off from the root. It can no longer absorb nourishment from the earth. The sunbeams, which, before it was cut down, were benefi-

cial to it, are now only detrimental." It is just the same with us men; as soon as a man has separated himself from God by mortal sin, he is on the road to perdition, however rich are his possessions of gold and silver.

Q. What do you call those graces or gifts of God by which we believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him?

A. Those graces or gifts of God by which we believe in Him, and hope in Him, and love Him, are called the Divine virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

The Thundering Legion

The young Christian members of this famous legion give us a conspicuous example of faith in the midst of unbelief, of hope amid despair, and of charity for their future executioners. The historian Eusebius relates that during an expedition which the Emperor Marcus Aurelius made in the year 170 A.D., in order to conquer the tribes inhabiting the district now known as Moravia, his troops were at one time while on the march decoyed into a narrow pass whence they could not get out without great difficulty. The sun beat down on them with its scorching rays, the soldiers were tortured with thirst, for no water was to be found where they were. Then all the Christians who were in the legion fell on their knees and sent up earnest prayers to Heaven. Before long, heavy clouds came up, and there was a tremendous storm, with torrents of rain. The Roman soldiers caught the rain in their helmets and shields, and refreshed by the welcome draughts thus afforded them, pressed

forward and put their foes to flight. This legion was afterward distinguished by the name of *legio fulminatrix*, the legion of the storm, or the Thundering Legion.

Q. What is Faith?

A. Faith is a Divine virtue by which we firmly believe the truths which God has revealed.

Louis IX and the Miraculous Host

The faith of a Christian is a firm conviction. During the reign of Louis IX, king of France, while Mass was being celebrated in one of the churches of Paris, Our Lord appeared in the sacred Host in the form of a little child. The people ran in crowds to the church, actuated by curiosity to behold this marvel. Some one went to the saintly King Louis to inform him of what had taken place. But the king did not leave his room. On being asked why he remained away, he answered: "God works this miracle for the sake of unbelievers, not for the faithful. I do not need to be convinced of the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Had I happened to be present when this miracle took place, I should have closed my eyes, so as not to lose the merit of faith." Hence it will be seen how steadfastly this holy monarch believed in the truth of all that the Church teaches.

Q. What is Hope?

A. Hope is a Divine virtue by which we firmly trust that God will give us eternal life and the means to obtain it.

The Deliverance of Vienna in 1683

When need is highest, God's help is nighest. In the year 1683 the Turkish army, consisting of 250,000 men, appeared before the walls of Vienna. On the 16th of July the town was surrounded; the siege lasted until the 12th of September. The garrison of the besieged city consisted of only 16,000 fighting men; their commander was the brave Starhemberg. The Turks endeavored to obtain possession of the town by undermining the walls. They constructed subterranean passages in which they placed gunpowder; this, when ignited, blew up large portions of the fortifications with a tremendous noise. Through the breaches thus made the enemy sought to effect an entrance into the town, but they were driven back by the valiant Viennese every time they made the attempt. Yet the number of the defenders gradually diminished and scarcity of provisions began to be felt. On the 11th of September the Turks, who knew that the town could not hold out much longer, attempted to take it by storm. This onslaught was terrific, worse than any previous one; yet this time the enemy was again repulsed. However, another such attack and the town would certainly be taken, and Austria would fall under the sway of the Turk. The distress seemed to have reached its height. But now that need was greatest, God's help was nighest. Rockets were continually sent up from the tower of St. Stephen's cathedral, and these fiery emissaries, seen at a great distance in the darkness of night, proclaimed the sore straits to which

the inhabitants were reduced. These were seen by the Christians, for the army of relief was already near at hand, encamped on a height overlooking the town. John Sobieski, the king of Poland, no sooner heard that Vienna was in danger of being taken by the Turks, than he hastened with an army of about 25,000 men to raise the siege ; his troops were joined by those of Duke Charles of Lorraine and of both the electors of Bavaria and of Saxony. Together they constituted a force of some 90,000 men. Early on the morning of the 12th of September, which was Sunday, a solemn stillness prevailed in the camp of the Christians. A white cross had been set up on the eminence as the common standard of the united army. Mass was said in St. Leopold's church, the king of Poland acting as server at the altar. All the leaders who were present received holy communion, and the soldiers knelt to receive the blessing of the priest. The king of Poland addressed his warriors, encouraging them in eloquent words to do their duty, relying on the aid of the Mother of God. Meanwhile the roar of the cannon was heard in the valley below, the bursting of the mines resounded from time to time, and the signals of distress within the town were redoubled. At length the order for the attack was given, five gunshots announcing to the besieged that succor was at hand. The Christians marched down the hill, their war-cry being the holy names of Jesus and Mary, and fell upon the Turks with unexampled fury. The battle lasted all day ; when evening closed in, the Turks fled in the wildest disorder. A large amount of valuable booty was

taken in the enemy's camp, and the greater part of the Christians who had been taken prisoners were set at liberty. Sobieski entered Vienna in triumph and straightway repaired to the cathedral, to give thanks to the Lord of hosts for the victory he had gained. The town was never again menaced by the Turks. Pope Innocent XI decreed that throughout the whole of Christendom the feast of the holy name of Mary should thenceforth be kept on the Sunday following the 8th of September, the nativity of Our Lady, in thanksgiving for the deliverance of Vienna.

Q. What is Charity?

A. Charity is a Divine virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

The Two Rings

God is supremely bountiful and kind, and hence worthy of our love. A certain monarch caused the figure of an angel to be carved in white marble. From the left hand of this statue hung a silver ring attached to a thin silken cord, while the right hand held a golden ring suspended from a diamond chain. The king's son and daughter asked their father what these two rings were intended to signify. He answered: "I will give the rings to whichever of you can guess their meaning aright." Then the prince said: "The rings are doubtless emblems of friendship and love." The king replied: "That is quite right. But why is one ring made of gold and the

other of silver?" The princess answered: "The silver ring signifies human friendship and affection. That friendship, that affection, cannot be relied upon; it hangs, as it were, by a slight cord which is easily broken. The gold ring signifies the love of God for man; that is firm and unchangeable; it cannot be broken." The king praised his children for the good answers they had given; he gave the silver ring with the silken cord to the prince, and the gold ring with the chain of diamonds to the princess. "God," says the Evangelist St. John, "is Charity."

Radetzky and the Beggar

Great men are, as a rule, condescending to their inferiors. The following kind act is recorded of the famous Austrian general, Count Radetzky. When, during the war with Napoleon, he was for a time stationed at Aussig, a town on the Elbe, he was one day sitting in a garden with several distinguished officers over a bottle of excellent wine, when a beggar with a wooden leg came up to them and asked the gentlemen for an alms. The waiter ordered him to be off, but Count Radetzky went up to him, and by putting some questions to him, discovered that he had been a soldier and had lost his leg in battle. He at once made him sit down at the table, and said to the officers: "This comrade of mine doubtless wielded his sword as bravely as I did myself, and performed his duty as a gallant trooper. He gained for himself a wooden leg, while a decoration fell to my share. It is only fair that we should do something to compensate for this freak of fortune." After

pouring out a glass of wine for the invalided veteran, he put several coins into his cap and passed it round the table. The soldier, delighted, raised his glass with a loud "Hurrah," for his gracious emperor and for Radetzky. He then took his departure with tears in his eyes. Well were it if this example of kindness and condescension were more generally imitated.

Q. What is actual grace?

A. Actual grace is that help of God which enlightens our mind and moves our will to shun evil and do good.

The Highwayman and the Blessed Sacrament

God in His mercy often touches the hearts of sinners at the moment when they are about to commit some evil deed. St. Paul the Apostle's conversion affords a proof of the truth of the sentence given above. There was once a highwayman who was converted in much the same manner as Saul, the persecutor of the Christians. The robber in question was one day lying in wait in a wood, concealed behind a bush, revolver in hand, watching for a merchant who would pass along that road on his way from the yearly market. For several hours he waited and watched in vain in his hiding-place; at length he heard footsteps approaching and held himself in readiness to fire. But instead of his intended victim, he descried a priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament, preceded by an acolyte bearing a lighted taper and a bell. The robber was confounded at this sight;

filled with compunction he followed the priest, and presently made confession to him of all his misdeeds. Then the priest said solemnly but kindly: "See, my son, you need not fear that Christ will reject you. Since you would not go to Him, He came into the wood to you. Do penance, therefore, and from henceforth amend your ways." The highwayman did, in fact, become a changed character, and endeavored to repair his past misdeeds by works of penance and charity to the poor. Hence we see that we should never despair of the conversion of any sinner before his death.

Two Apostate Priests Converted

Every priest is authorized to give absolution when the penitent is in danger of death. At the time of the French Revolution, when many priests apostatized from the faith, the following incident took place. Several Protestant clergymen were dining together, and enjoying themselves very much. While they were still seated at table a messenger entered, saying that in a house near by a man was dying, and urgently entreating that a priest might be brought to him. One of the company rose up and said he would go to the dying man, whom he found perfectly conscious. The clergyman began to repeat some passages from Holy Scripture; but the sick man stopped him. "I am a Catholic priest," he said, "one who has apostatized from the faith. Now I earnestly desire to be received back into the Catholic Church, and to be absolved from my sin in the Sacrament of Penance. I beg you to have the

goodness to find a Catholic priest and send him to me." On hearing this the Protestant was much moved, and with tears in his eyes he answered: "O my dear friend, I, too, was formerly a Catholic priest and unhappily gave up my faith. But as you know, I still possess the power to absolve in the hour of death. Therefore I can as formerly give you absolution if you confess your sins." Thereupon the dying penitent confessed his sins and received absolution. With his last breath he returned thanks to the good providence of God, and praised His boundless mercy, for it seemed to him almost as if the Most High had sent an angel from above to rescue him from eternal perdition. The Protestant returned to his boon companions, but the pleasures of the table had lost their attractions for him; he was, through God's grace, a changed man. He forsook the society of his heretical friends, was reconciled to the Church, and led an exemplary life until the end of his days.

Q. Is grace necessary to salvation?

A. Grace is necessary to salvation, because without grace we can do nothing to merit heaven.

The Heiress and the Mason

In the work of an author who wrote many books for the young, we read the following anecdote. The incident related occurred a long time ago. A young lady of rank, whose parents were dead, lived in a grand castle and prided herself very much on her social standing. One day the daughter of a stonemason came to her in great haste, begging her to

come at once to her father, who lay on his deathbed, and had something of importance to communicate to the lady. But the lady would not be prevailed upon to go to the man: "What," she said to herself, "can a low day-laborer have to say to me?" About an hour later the girl came again, breathless with running. "My Lady," she said, "I entreat you to come at once, and quickly. During the late war your mother caused a large quantity of gold and silver plate to be built into a cavity in the walls of your castle. My father was under a promise not to reveal the secret to you until you were twenty years of age; but as he is now at the point of death, he wishes to tell Your Ladyship where the valuables are hidden." When the young lady heard this, she lost no time in repairing to the cottage where the man lay dying; but when she got there, she found he had just expired. She was dreadfully annoyed and disappointed; she had the walls searched in many places, but all in vain — the treasures were not discovered. Many people act in much the same way when God calls them by His grace. They pay no heed to His call, especially if a humble instrument is chosen to convey His message. But alas! for many the hour will come when they will seek God and not be able to find Him.

The Wooden Horse of Troy

In the hour of temptation dangerous things appear attractive to us, and hence the greater the need of grace. In ancient history we read that the Greeks, with an army of 100,000 valiant warriors, laid siege

to the city of Troy in Asia Minor. As the city was strongly built and was garrisoned by brave defenders, for ten long years it held out against the Greeks. Finding they were unable to take it by force, the besiegers resolved to have recourse to stratagem. Accordingly they constructed a gigantic wooden horse, dragged it up close to the city walls, and then withdrew to their ships, as if, weary of the protracted hostilities, they were about to return to their own country. A few stragglers were left behind who were instructed to inform the Trojans that the Greeks had constructed the horse to propitiate the gods and obtain favorable winds for their voyage homeward. The Trojans determined to draw the horse into the city as a trophy of their victorious defense of their homes. A few wise men among the inhabitants warned them not to accept this gift from the enemy; one especially, named Laocoön, pronounced these memorable words: "Beware of the Danaos, even when they bring gifts." But their counsel was unheeded; the horse was drawn in triumph into the city. That same night thirty Grecian warriors, who were concealed within the body of the horse, issued forth from their hiding-place, put the sentinels to death, and opened the gates. Then the Greeks who, meanwhile, had returned to their camp, made their way into the city and slaughtered the inhabitants. Troy was burned to the ground. The enemy of mankind acts in the same way as the wily Greeks; he invests what will prove dangerous with attraction in our eyes. Unhappy those who fall into his snares.

Q. Can we resist the grace of God?

A. We can, and unfortunately often do, resist the grace of God.

The Foolhardy Stag

It is perilous to withstand the operation of divine grace. A stag was feeding beside a spring when the report of a gun was heard. The stag was startled, and raised his head, looking around as if to see whether the shot was intended for him. Then he went on browsing until a second shot resounded through the forest. The stag leaped aside, for a ball whizzed close to his head; but instead of flying, as one would have expected, he returned to graze on the rush herbage by the spring, just as if there was nothing to fear. The unseen sportsman took aim once more; a third shot, and the stag fell, mortally wounded. So it is with many a man. God calls to him by the medium of some calamity, or by the mouth of a preacher, or some other means, warning him to abandon his sinful life. Let such a one take heed, and obey the call of grace while there is yet time, for who can tell whether the next call may not be the last, and the hand of death be raised to strike him down.

Q. What is the grace of perseverance?

A. The grace of perseverance is a particular gift of God which enables us to continue in the state of grace till death.

The Devil on the City Wall

Temptations are a good sign. Dogs do not bark at the people of the house, but at strangers. The

devil does the same; he concerns himself little about sinners, he knows he is secure of getting them. It is otherwise with good people, he besets them sorely. St. Ephrem relates an instructive dream which he had on this subject. He fancied himself walking in the streets of a great and wicked city. As he passed the gate he saw a devil sitting on the upper part, half asleep; only now and again he raised his head and looked around him. Ephrem left the city and went into the desert, where he found a hermit molested by a swarm of devils. The saint was astonished at this, and cried out: "Are you not ashamed of yourselves, you filthy creatures? Here you are so many against one, and there in that great town there is only one of you, and he is half asleep all the time." They answered him: "True, we need not give ourselves any trouble in that large town; there the presence of one devil is almost superfluous. But here there are not enough of us, for this pious man does us a great deal of harm." He is in evil case who either has no temptations or is unconscious of having any.

What a Boy did to Get a Situation

With what earnestness men ought to exert themselves for the attainment of their highest end! A poor boy once went to a rich merchant and begged him to take him into his employ. The merchant looked at the applicant from head to foot and said: "Why! you have no boots; you must have a pair of boots before I can take you." The boy went away and by running errands and doing little jobs, he got

together enough money to buy a pair of boots. Then he presented himself again at the merchant's office, and said: "Please, sir, I have got boots now. Will you be so kind as to take me into your house of business?" But the merchant told him he could not take him into his service while he was so ragged; he must get himself a better suit of clothes. The boy took his departure without a word. A few months later, he made his appearance again, this time much more respectably dressed. He had earned a little in the meantime and managed to buy some new clothes. Still the merchant was not satisfied; he examined the lad, and found that he was not proficient in reading and writing. So he dismissed him a third time, saying: "You must learn to read and write better." The boy departed with downcast looks, yet he was not completely discouraged; he took the greatest pains to improve himself in reading and writing. Again at the end of several months he presented himself before the merchant. "Now," he said, "I can read and write a great deal better." When the merchant had tested the truth of this assertion, he at once took the boy into his service, for he thought: "If this mere child can strive to attain his end with such determination, he will make an excellent man of business." Nor was he deceived, for in a few years' time the youth had risen to the highest post in the mercantile house. Now, if men exert themselves so much in order to get a good situation on earth, what trouble ought they not to take for the sake of attaining the one thing of all others most desirable, eternal felicity?

Crœsus and Solon

Solon, one of the sages of antiquity, once paid a visit to King Crœsus, the wealthy Asiatic monarch, who exhibited all his treasures to him, and afterwards asked him: "Am I not the richest and most fortunate man in the whole world?" Solon replied: "Call no man happy before he is dead." By this he intended to signify that the king might lose all his immense possessions before his death. And so it came to pass. Soon after the visit of the sage, Crœsus entered upon a war with Cyrus, the king of Persia. First of all he sent to the oracle of Delphi, to inquire whether he would conquer. The answer of the oracle was, as usual, ambiguous. "If Crœsus crosses the river Halys, he will overthrow a vast kingdom." Crœsus interpreted this saying in his own favor, and boldly crossed the river in question. He was defeated by Cyrus and taken prisoner. The conqueror condemned him to be burned upon a funeral pile (549 B.C.). When Crœsus was bound to the stake, he exclaimed: "Solon, Solon, Solon!" Cyrus heard this, and wondering what the exclamation signified, he caused his captive to be unbound and brought to him. He asked him why he called on the name of Solon, and Crœsus related the conversation he had had with the sage. King Cyrus thought in his heart that the same might happen in his own case, and thereupon spared Crœsus' life and let him go free. Let no one pride himself on the amount of his wealth and the extent of his possessions, for he may at any moment lose them.

LESSON ELEVENTH

ON THE CHURCH

Q. Which are the means instituted by Our Lord to enable men at all times to share in the fruits of the Redemption?

A. The means instituted by Our Lord to enable men at all times to share in the fruits of His Redemption are the Church and the Sacraments.

The Catholic Church

St. Augustine, writing against the Manichean sect to which he had in his youth belonged, says that what most appealed to him and most strongly led him to the true Church was the name "Catholic," which no sect has ever been able to appropriate. "For," says he, "though all lay claim to the title of Catholic, yet not one among them is called by that name, nor is there a heretic, who, if you met him in the street and asked him: 'Where is the Catholic Church?' would dare to direct you to his own schismatical assembly." These words are as true of the world to-day as they were when they were penned by the saintly Bishop of Hippo. The word "Catholic" means world-wide, and hence no sect or national establishment can consistently claim such a title.

Q. What is the Church?

A. The Church is the congregation of all those who profess the faith of Christ, partake of the same Sacraments, and are governed by their lawful pastors under one visible head.

The Charitable Hermit

We ought to exercise charity to those also who are non-Catholics, for though they are in error, they still are our brethren. In the desert of Thebaid, where many anchorites who held the true faith had taken up their abode, there was one hermit who held the heretical tenets of the Manichees. This man when on a journey lost his way in the desert and got benighted. Darkness had already closed in when he came upon the hut of another hermit; the wanderer paused at the door, not knowing how he would be received if he entered, for he knew the inmate to be a stanch Catholic. However, fear of the wild beasts that he heard roaring in the distance prevented him from venturing any farther; he determined to ask for a night's shelter. On entering the hut he said to the hermit: "I am not an orthodox Catholic, yet I must beg you to take me in for the night." The hermit bade him welcome, entertained him most hospitably, and gave him a comfortable bed. The stranger said to himself: "This man must be a true servant of God, for Christ Himself tells us that charity is the distinguishing mark of His disciples. I do not believe that a Manichee would have treated a Catholic so kindly." Before long the Manichee abjured his heretical creed

and became an orthodox Christian. Thus the hermit gained a soul by his charity. If he had behaved with discourtesy or shown the stranger scant hospitality, he would only have confirmed him in his erroneous tenets. Would not Our Lord say to each one of us: "Go and do thou in like manner"?

Q. Who is the invisible head of the Church?
A. Jesus Christ is the invisible head of the Church.

A Railway Inspector as Signalman

We ought not to make it impossible for non-Catholics to perform their religious duties. At one of the large railway depots in Germany several of the company's servants, who were off duty, went into the town on the feast of Corpus Christi to take part in the procession. One of the pointsmen, who also was a Catholic, was looking wistfully after his comrades as they left the terminus, when the inspector happened to pass by. "Perhaps you, too, would like to go to the procession?" he said to the man. "I should indeed, sir," he replied, "if my work allowed of it." "You may go," the inspector rejoined; "I give you permission. You may have two hours' leave of absence." The man thanked the inspector, but drew his attention to the fact that a train was due in a few minutes' time, and the signals must be changed. But his master bade him go, and remained himself at his post until the points were shifted; then he sent another man to take his place. One cannot do otherwise than esteem a man who showed such consideration for religious beliefs which he did not share.

Q. Who is the visible head of the Church?

A. Our Holy Father the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, is the Vicar of Christ on earth and the visible head of the Church.

St. Pachomius

St. Pachomius was converted in a somewhat singular manner. While he was still a pagan, and serving in the army, he was quartered in the house of a Christian family in Thebes in Egypt. He was treated with the greatest kindness, just as if he were a son, or at least a near relative, of the householder. The charity thus shown him made a deep impression on Pachomius, and involuntarily he learned to respect their religion. In consequence of this, he asked to be instructed in the Christian faith, and was presently baptized. He subsequently rendered great service to the cause of Christianity.

Q. Why is the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, the visible head of the Church?

A. The Pope, the Bishop of Rome, is the visible head of the Church because he is the successor of St. Peter, whom Christ made the chief of the apostles and the visible head of the Church.

Mary, Queen of Scots

A contrast to the foregoing anecdotes is afforded by the conduct of Queen Elizabeth of England, the Protestant daughter of King Henry VIII (who reigned from 1558 to 1603). This queen caused her relative, Mary Stuart, the Catholic queen of Scotland, who had pretensions to the throne of England, to be ar-

rested, imprisoned during a long period, and finally condemned to death. When the sentence was read to Mary Stuart, she showed no signs of agitation; she merely requested that her confessor, who was also a prisoner, might be permitted to come to her for a few minutes. Yet this privilege, which is granted to the greatest criminal, Elizabeth, out of religious hatred, denied to the sorely tried queen. Nay, more; she actually sent a Protestant minister, himself an apostate priest, to endeavor to induce her to abjure the Catholic faith. But Mary indignantly repulsed the overtures of this traitor, and went to execution with perfect fortitude.

Q. Who are the successors of the other apostles?

A. The successors of the other apostles are the bishops of the Holy Catholic Church.

Pius IX and the Student

Good and great men are tolerant as a rule, whereas the ignorant are generally intolerant. On one occasion Pope Pius IX was walking unattended through the Vatican galleries. In one of these he noticed a young Englishman, gazing rapturously at one of Raphael's paintings. The Holy Father stood still and looked at him. The young man, perceiving him, made him a profound obeisance. Then the Pope, addressing him, said: "I presume you are an artist, my son?" The young man replied that he had come to Rome to study painting, but unfortunately he had not sufficient means to pay the fees required for admission to the Academy. Pius IX

thereupon promised that he himself would provide the necessary funds to enable him to pursue his studies. "But, your Holiness," the Englishman exclaimed in astonishment, "I am a Protestant." "That does not alter the case," the Holy Father replied with a kindly smile; "admission to the studios will not be denied you on that account."

Q. Why did Christ found the Church?

A. Christ founded the Church to teach, govern, sanctify, and save all men.

Pius IX and the Jew

The true Christian becomes all things to all that he may save all. One day when Pius IX was driving out in Rome (in 1847) he descried an aged man lying on the ground in a faint. Immediately he stopped the carriage, and himself alighting, went up to the stranger. On inquiring of the bystanders how it was that the man had become unconscious, they replied that they did not know; it was only a Jew. The Pope was angry at hearing them speak so uncharitably of the poor man; he had him lifted into his carriage and driven to the place where he lived. And when the Pope returned to the Vatican, he sent his own physician to prescribe for the sick man. It is unworthy of a Christian to refuse aid to any one because he is of a different creed or nationality.

Q. Are all bound to belong to the Church?

A. All are bound to belong to the Church, and he who knows the Church to be the true Church and remains out of it cannot be saved.

Napoleon's Altar

When the Emperor Napoleon was preparing himself for death on the island of St. Helena, he gave orders that an altar should be erected in his room, and beautifully decorated for the reception of the Blessed Sacrament. One of his generals, Bertrand by name, ventured to expostulate with him, remarking that a monk might fitly express such a wish, but not a soldier and an emperor. Thereupon Napoleon raised himself from the couch where he lay, and said in an imperative manner: "Surely, I am master in my own chamber. You have no right to interfere with my commands. I never meddle with your domestic arrangements." The ex-emperor was quite right. No one is justified in deterring another from the performance of his religious duties, least of all in his own house.

LESSON TWELFTH

ON THE ATTRIBUTES AND MARKS OF THE CHURCH

Q. Which are the attributes of the Church?

A. The attributes of the Church are three: authority, infallibility, and indefectibility.

A Congress of Divines

A Catholic priest and a Protestant minister were one day walking together when they happened to meet a Jewish rabbi. "Here we are," cried the minister, laughing, "three men of different creeds. Now I wonder which of us is he who has been really authorized to announce the truths of religion with certainty for all time." "I will tell you," said the rabbi. "If the Messias has not yet come, I am the man. If Jesus Christ was really the Messias, then our reverend Father here is the only true priest among us. But whether the Messias be really come or not, you, Mr. Minister, are certainly in the wrong."

Q. What do you mean by the authority of the Church?

A. By the authority of the Church I mean the right and power which the Pope and the bishops, as the successors of the apostles, have to teach and to govern the faithful.

Individual Exposition of Scripture

The true Church cannot permit private interpretation of Holy Scripture. The principle that every one is free to put his own interpretation on the words of Holy Writ, is utterly false; otherwise two or three conflicting opinions would each and all be correct, which is a moral impossibility. Truth is one; no one can prove that two and two do not make four. So it is with the truths of our faith. The following instances show the result of putting the Bible into the hands of the people, and allowing them to expound it at will. 1. A man stole his neighbor's cloak. When charged with the theft, he defended himself by saying he had only carried out the scriptural admonition: "Bear ye one another's burdens." 2. Again, the doctrine of private interpretation is responsible for the almost endless multiplicity of the so-called Christian sects, for their bitter opposition to one another, and their apparently hopeless disunion. This principle may justly be charged with all the graver heresies ever put forth and the absurd vagaries of the Scientists, Adventists, Zionists, etc.

Q. What do you mean by the infallibility of the Church?

A. By the infallibility of the Church I mean that the Church cannot err when it teaches a doctrine of faith or morals.

Better to be Sure than Sorry

Henry IV, king of France, having fallen away from the true faith, was led to abjure his errors in the

following manner: Having called before him a conference of Catholic priests and Protestant ministers, he demanded of the latter if salvation were possible in the Catholic Church. "Certainly, sire," they replied, "provided a Catholic lives well." "And you," said the king, turning to the priests, "do you admit that the only requisite for salvation for a Protestant is that he live well?" "Certainly not," they answered. "If God gives him the light to know the true Church, he is bound to submit himself to her infallible teaching authority, and discipline. Otherwise he will surely be lost." "Then," said the king, "prudence demands that I become a Catholic once more. By such a step I lose nothing, and gain much. If hereafter it shall appear that the Catholic is not the true infallible Church of Christ, I shall be no worse off than had I remained a Protestant. But if she is the true Church, I shall have gained everything, — my soul's salvation."

Q. When does the Church teach infallibly?

A. The Church teaches infallibly when it speaks through the Pope and the bishops, united in general council, or through the Pope alone when he proclaims to all the faithful a doctrine of faith or morals.

The Vatican Council

On the 8th of December, 1869, there met together in St. Peter's church, Rome, a vast assembly of Catholic bishops from all parts of the world. These prelates, over six hundred in number, had flocked to Rome at the call of Pius IX, to condemn the errors of an un-

believing age, and especially to define the dogma of Papal Infallibility. The Vatican Council was the twentieth General Council since the time of the apostles. The Vatican Council, like all its predecessors, takes its name from the locality where it was held, viz. in the Palace and Basilica on the Vatican Hill.

Q. What do you mean by the indefectibility of the Church?

A. By the indefectibility of the Church I mean that the Church, as Christ founded it, will last till the end of time.

"I am with you All Days"

The Catholic Church cannot be overthrown. When, at the time of the *Kulturkampf*, the Catholic Church was grievously persecuted in Germany, a Protestant, meeting a priest in society, remarked triumphantly: "The Catholic Church is in sore straits; it will soon be *Matthäus am letzten*," *i.e.* at its last gasp. The priest, who was quick at repartee, instantly replied: "You are quite right, sir. So it always has been, and so it always will be." The Protestant, astonished at this unexpected answer, begged his interlocutor to explain himself. The clergyman answered: "In the end of St. Matthew's gospel, the last verse (*Matthäus am letzten*) runs thus: 'Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.' These words from Our Lord's lips are the solace and trust of Catholics."

Q. In whom are these attributes found in their fulness?

A. These attributes are found in their fulness in the Pope, the visible head of the Church, whose infallible authority to teach bishops, priests, and people in matters of faith or morals will last to the end of the world.

The Emperor Napoleon and Pope Pius VII

The Catholic Church comes victorious out of all persecutions. A very striking historical parallel may be drawn between the lives of the Emperor Napoleon and Pope Pius VII, as far as external merits are concerned, at least. When the Pontiff in question repaired to Paris in the year 1804, to assist at the coronation of the emperor, the latter tried his utmost to persuade him to remove the Papal seat to Paris. Pacing up and down the room, Napoleon set before the Holy Father, in high-flown language and with emphatic gestures, the advantages of every kind presented by this proposed transfer. The Pope listened in silence, then he remarked: "How well you act comedy." This was equivalent to comparing him to an actor who takes droll or foolish parts in a play. Napoleon was incensed at this reply. Snatching up a drawing of St. Peter's at Rome, he tore it into fragments before the Holy Father's eyes, exclaiming: "This is what I shall do to the Church! I will crush her utterly." "Now you act tragedy," the Pope calmly rejoined. By this he intended to signify that Napoleon would later on find himself in tragic circumstances, that he would be overtaken by misfortune.

The following facts prove that in uttering these words Pius VII spoke prophetically.

(1) Napoleon kept Pope Pius VII in captivity for five years, in two different places; Savona and Fontainebleau; later on he was himself kept a prisoner for seven years, first on the island of Elba, afterwards on St. Helena.

(2) While the Pontiff was a captive at Fontainebleau, Napoleon forced him to relinquish possession of the States of the Church, promising him a yearly income of two million francs (about $400,000). By a most remarkable coincidence in that very same castle, — nay, even in the very same room, — Napoleon was forced to sign the decree of his deposition (1814), two million francs being assigned as his annual income.

(3) On the 13th of May, 1809, at Vienna, Napoleon issued the decree by which the Pope was despoiled of the States of the Church. From that time forward his fortune turned; four days after, for the first time in his triumphant career, he was defeated in battle, and Europe perceived that he was not invincible.

(4) Thereupon he was excommunicated by the Holy See, and excluded from the Church. When he heard this, he laughed, and said: "The arms will not drop out of my soldiers' hands because of that." However, when in 1814 Napoleon entered on the campaign against Russia, almost all his troops, half a million of men, perished miserably; and literally their weapons fell from their hands through the excessive severity of the cold.

(5) On the 5th of May, 1821, Napoleon died on St.

Helena, while a terrific storm was raging. Singular to relate, he died on the name-day of Pope Pius VII (on the 5th of May the Church commemorates St. Pius); but by that time the Supreme Pontiff had returned to Rome and was reinstated in the possession of the dominions of the Church. A Catholic Christian, reviewing these remarkable events, cannot fail to trace the guidance of Divine Providence throughout, and to rejoice in the protection God extends to His Church. The Church's adversaries, on the contrary, will pronounce these events to be merely fortuitous.

Q. Has the Church any marks by which it may be known?

A. The Church has four marks by which it may be known: it is one; it is holy; it is catholic; it is apostolic.

The College of the Propaganda

The College of the Propaganda, Rome, Italy, affords a very striking illustration of these four marks. In this college young men are prepared for and sent out to the Catholic missions of the world. Through the city are scattered the national colleges representing every nation on the earth, but the students of all of them come together for lectures twice a day at the Propaganda. The Catholicity or universality of the Church is evidenced in the varied complexions of the students, in their different uniforms, and in the multiplicity of the languages spoken. The Church's unity is strongly brought out in the fact that notwithstanding their diversity, the professor imparts

the same doctrine to all in the same Latin language, and all are animated by the same lofty purpose. The venerable university that has sent forth many saints and martyrs and the soil of Rome so often watered with martyrs' blood attest the holiness of the Church; and over on the Vatican Hill is he, the direct successor of St. Peter and the living proof of the Church's apostolicity.

Q. How is the Church one?

A. The Church is one because all its members agree in one faith, are all in one communion, and are all under one head.

The Distracted Minister

A certain Protestant minister of Boston, an honest and sincere man according to his lights, undertook some years ago to combine in one volume brief sketches or expositions of the creeds of all denominations. Very fairly and impartially he set forth the Catholic belief, the Episcopalian, and the Congregationalist, etc.; but as he worked down through the list he began to be more and more puzzled, until finally arriving at the Baptists, hard shell and soft shell, and Christian Scientists, etc., he threw down his pen, saying: "The rest will not stand still long enough to have their pictures taken."

Q. How is the Church holy?

A. The Church is holy because its founder, Jesus Christ, is holy; because it teaches a holy doctrine; invites all to a holy life; and because of the eminent holiness of so many thousands of its children.

Phillips Brooks

The devotion of Catholics to their clergy and to their religion generally is a source of never ending wonder to Protestants. The sacrifices our people in the United States have made and are making to build up a Parochial School system is a good instance of this. It is an incontestable argument for the power of the true faith and its ability to inculcate holiness of life. Phillips Brooks, the late Episcopal Bishop of Massachusetts, when rector of a church in Philadelphia, often remarked to his curate at breakfast that it was wonderful to peep out of one's window on a bleak winter's morning and see crowds of Catholics trooping to church at 4.30 A.M., on a holy-day of obligation. "Suppose," he would say, "you and I were to announce to our people next Sunday that on the Wednesday following there would be special services at 4.30 A.M. How many, think you, would we find present?" And then Brooks' countenance would cloud over, and growing thoughtful he would say over and over to himself: "A wonderful institution, surely; a wonderful institution!" The curate in question is now a Catholic priest.

Q. How is the Church catholic or universal?

A. The Church is catholic or universal because it subsists in all ages, teaches all nations, and maintains all truth.

The Ambassador's Answer

Apropos of the Church's subsistence in all ages, an excellent answer was made by a French ambassador, ill at Stockholm, in Protestant Sweden. Some one asked him whether, in case he died there, he would not be sorry to have his ashes mingle with those of heretics. "No," he replied, "I would simply ask to have the earth dug a little deeper, and thus I should rest among your ancestors who were Catholics like myself."

Q. How is the Church apostolic?

A. The Church is apostolic because it was founded by Christ on His apostles, and is governed by their lawful successors, and because it has never ceased, and never will cease, to teach their doctrine.

The Faith of Our Fathers

Count Stolberg, a Protestant writer of great merit, was received into the Catholic Church on Whitsunday, 1800 A.D. A Protestant friend remarked to him: "I do not like people who abandon the religion of their fathers." Stolberg answered: "Neither do I. If my forefathers had not abandoned the faith of their fathers, I should not be compelled to return to the Catholic Church."

A Protestant lady said to a friend who had become a Catholic: "I mean to live and die in the faith of my fathers." The Catholic replied: "And I mean to die in the faith of my ancestors."

Q. In which Church are these attributes and marks found?

A. These attributes and marks are found in the Holy Roman Catholic Church alone.

The Sagacious Poles

A certain Russian general received from the Czar a grant of extensive ecclesiastical property in Poland, as the recompense of his exploits. When, a few days later, he had to take the field against the Turks, he thought he would do something to gain favor with the emperor. So he called together some of the principal tenants on his Polish estates — all poor men — and said to them: "Before I start on my journey I will give each of you a considerable piece of land, on this condition, that you adopt the Russian instead of the Catholic religion. Take time to reflect on this offer and tell me your decision." After consulting together for a long time the poverty-stricken Poles returned to the general, and with a cheerful demeanor said to him: "May it please your Excellency, this is what we think about the matter: if, for instance, a man wanted to exchange his horse for one of ours, and offered to give us something into the bargain as well, we should know that his horse was not so good a one as ours. Consequently it follows of necessity that our faith must be worth more than the Russian, since your Excellency would give us a good piece of land if we would exchange our Catholic faith for the Russian religion." "O you consummate scoundrels!" the general exclaimed, and depend upon it, he would

assuredly have had them all thoroughly knouted, had they not forthwith taken to their heels and made off. Firmness in resisting temptation is highly to be commended.

Q. From whom does the Church derive its undying life and infallible authority?

A. The Church derives its undying life and infallible authority from the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, who abides with it forever.

The Holy Ghost the Soul of the Church

The Holy Ghost is to the Church what the soul is to the body. The principal seat of the soul is the head, and from the head it diffuses itself throughout the entire system. So it is with the Holy Ghost and the Church ; from Christ the head the Holy Spirit is diffused throughout all the members. Just as the soul is entire in each member, so the Holy Ghost exists in every member of the Church. The body cannot decay as long as it is vivified by the soul, and hence the Church cannot cease to exist, because the Spirit has said: "I am with you all days, even to the end of the world." The Church has divine authority, for when she teaches and rules, she teaches and rules, not she, but the Spirit in her, and "he that hears her, hears Him."

Q. By whom is the Church made and kept one, holy, and catholic?

A. The Church is made and kept one, holy, and catholic by the Holy Ghost, the spirit of love and holiness, who unites and sanctifies its members throughout the world.

The Bond of Unity

When the soul leaves the body, the members decay, separate, and disappear. The Holy Ghost animates all the Church's members and thus preserves their unity and existence. Many members are afflicted with the paralysis of mortal sin. They do not cease to be members, but, deprived of the Holy Ghost, they hang limply on to the Church's body. They may be cured by repentance ; but if death intervenes, they are cut off from the Church forever.

LESSON THIRTEENTH

ON THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL

Q. What is a sacrament?

A. A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace.

The Natural Order and the Supernatural

There is a close analogy between the natural order and the supernatural. This is especially apparent in the seven sacraments instituted by Christ. The natural function of water is to cleanse, and the grace of Baptism is the removal of the stain of original sin. Bread and wine are man's natural food and drink, and under their appearances Christ gives Himself to be the food and drink of our souls. Seven things, in fact, are necessary to the natural man : 1st, That he come into the world ; 2d, that he be developed and strengthened ; 3d, that he be nourished with food and drink ; 4th, that in illness he employ medicines ; 5th, that when enfeebled with age and infirmities he subject himself to a strict regimen ; 6th, that there be magistrates to defend, direct, and if need be to punish him ; and 7th, that he propagate his species. Corresponding to each of these, there is in the supernatural order a sacrament instituted by Christ.

Q. How many sacraments are there?

A. There are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.

The Cities of Refuge

When Moses had led the people of Israel out of Egypt through the waters of the Red Sea into the Promised Land, God bade him appoint six cities through whose walls vengeance should never be allowed to pass in pursuit of its shivering victim. Herein we have a striking figure of the seven sacraments of the New Law. Baptism is represented in the miraculous passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and the other six sacraments are the six cities of refuge of the Christian dispensation, where the sinner is sure of protection from the just anger of God.

Q. Whence have the sacraments the power of giving grace?

A. The sacraments have the power of giving grace from the merits of Jesus Christ.

The Two Fountains

In the midst of a vast plain were two fountains, and from each fountain seven channels carried the waters of each to every part of the plain. The waters of the first fountain, though a little bitter perhaps, had wonderful virtue; by drinking them the old were made young, the ugly were beautified, the deformed

and the sick were healed, and even the dead when plunged in were restored to life. The waters of the other fountain, though sweet to the taste, grew bitter in the swallowing, produced vomiting, convulsions, and even death. The first fountain is Jesus Christ, and the seven streams, the channels of His grace, the seven sacraments. The other fountain is the devil, and from him flow the seven deadly sins. The misery of it all is, that notwithstanding the difference in their effects, many refuse to drink of the first fountain, and eagerly seek the waters of the other.

Q. What grace do the sacraments give?

A. Some of the sacraments give sanctifying grace, and others increase it in our souls.

Life, Physical and Spiritual

The animating principle of our body is our soul, and the animating principle of our soul is sanctifying grace. When the soul leaves the body, the body is dead; and sickness is nothing more or less than an approach toward death, or a lessening of the vivifying influence of the soul on the body. So also, when sanctifying grace is driven out of the soul by mortal sin, the soul dies spiritually, and if the sin be but venial, the grace of God is lessened and the soul becomes ill. Hence, the function of the sacraments is either to restore the soul to life by imparting sanctifying grace, or else by increasing that grace to strengthen and invigorate the soul.

Q. Which are the sacraments that give sanctifying grace?

A. The sacraments that give sanctifying grace are Baptism and Penance; and they are called sacraments of the dead.

Two Kinds of Suicide

It is a fact worth remembering that, though we come into the world with live bodies, we are born with souls spiritually dead. That is why Christ asserted the necessity of a second birth, — of water and the Holy Ghost. And it is a fact equally to be remembered that, as God gave us the life of our body at our creation, so in our Baptism He gave us the life of our soul, and each life belongs not to us but to Him, and is ours to use only, but not to destroy. Physical suicide, therefore, is a great crime, but spiritual suicide by mortal sin is a greater crime still, for the soul is vastly more precious than the body. But blessed be God who has given us Baptism to give life to our soul, and Penance to restore to us that life when through our own folly we have lost it!

Q. Why are Baptism and Penance called sacraments of the dead?

A. Baptism and Penance are called sacraments of the dead because they take away sin, which is the death of the soul, and give grace, which is its life.

A Man of Eighty only Two Years of Age

A missionary relates that he once baptized a man of eighty years of age. Two years later, as he lay

on his deathbed, some one asked him how old he was, and the old man answered that he was only two. On his interrogator laughing at such an answer, the old man explained: "I did not begin to live until I received Baptism. My former years were death, not life." In like manner one who has spent half his life in mortal sin, might truthfully divide his years by two.

Q. Which are the sacraments that increase sanctifying grace in our soul?

A. The sacraments that increase sanctifying grace in our soul are: Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony; and they are called sacraments of the living.

The Physician, Spiritual and Physical

A priest and a physician met at the bedside of a sick person, and after each had fulfilled the respective duties of his office, the physician remarked that the duties of each were concerned with human ills, but in different orders and in different degrees. "My ministrations," he said, "deal with the body only and stop short at the grave; but yours, Reverend Father, penetrate to the soul and into eternity. As we used to say at school, your medicines are intensively and extensively more potent than mine." "Very true," the priest replied, "and all the more so because with Baptism and Penance I restore the dead (souls) to life, and with the other five sacraments I nourish them through convalescence unto perfect health."

Q. Why are Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony called sacraments of the living?

A. Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony are called sacraments of the living, because those who receive them worthily are already living the life of grace.

The Efficiency of Medicines

Medicines are stimulated into action by the body's natural heat. When introduced into a corpse they lie dormant and produce no effect whatever. So it is, also, with these five sacraments; unless the person receiving them has been restored to the life of grace, they remain unproductive of any beneficial effect.

Q. What sin does he commit who receives the sacraments of the living in mortal sin?

A. He who receives the sacraments of the living in mortal sin commits a sacrilege, which is a great sin, because it is an abuse of a sacred thing.

The Robber Chief's Advice

A band of robbers numbered among them a young man, as yet timid, whose sense of right had not been quite stifled. "Go and receive the sacraments unworthily," said the chieftain, "and you will no longer fear." Unfortunately the young man followed this diabolical advice, and soon found how true it is that

sacrilege hardens the heart, for he became in time the most desperate of a desperate lot.

Q. Besides sanctifying grace do the sacraments give any other kind of grace?

A. Besides sanctifying grace the sacraments give another grace, called sacramental.

The Testimony of Goethe

The sacraments, as the spiritual medicines of our souls, not only restore the dead to life, but fortify them with helps whereby, whenever occasion calls for it, they may fittingly discharge the duties of the spiritual life. Goethe, poet and philosopher, and one of Germany's greatest nineteenth-century geniuses notwithstanding his many errors, thus discourses on the sacraments: "It is important that the source of salvation which springs for us in these sacraments should flow, not once only, but whilst we are on earth. And these means, the efficacy of which we shall have experienced during our whole life, we shall feel ten times more at the gates of death. Following the pious custom of his life, the dying Christian embraces with fervor the visible symbols of the truths which promise him a new life, and in which he receives from Heaven the pledges of an eternal felicity."

Q. What is sacramental grace?

A. Sacramental grace is a special help which God gives, to attain the end for which He instituted each sacrament.

Our Divine Commander-in-chief

In our spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness, Jesus Christ is our Commander, and it is characteristic of Him that He never asks His soldiers to go into any danger where He Himself does not lead. "Follow Me," is ever the tenor of His commands. Kings and great generals view the battle from the neighboring hills, but Christ is ever with us in the thick of the struggle. We are not, therefore, left to our own weak devices in fulfilling the promises we made in the reception of each sacrament; when the hour of trial comes, Christ is with us by His sacramental grace, shielding us, cheering us on, and leading us to the onset.

Q. Do the sacraments always give grace?

A. The sacraments always give grace, if we receive them with the right dispositions.

Light and Darkness

A soul in mortal sin is like a room in darkness, and a soul in a state of grace resembles a chamber brightly illuminated. It is not necessary to remark that the darkness and the light cannot exist in the room at the same time, but it is well to remember that God will never do violence to man's freedom of will, and that however often we may receive the sacraments, we will never experience their illuminating effects as long as we voluntarily allow our souls to remain in the darkness of mortal sin. If, however, we, by a worthy reception of the sacraments, dispel

the darkness, our souls will be flooded with the light of God's grace as naturally and as necessarily as day follows night.

Q. Can we receive the sacraments more than once?
A. We can receive the sacraments more than once, except Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders.

Marked as God's Own

By Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders man is brought into relationship with his God as child, soldier, and priest. In Baptism God stamps on the soul His own likeness, never to be effaced; for that soul, once born to God, must ever be His son. In Confirmation one enlists in God's army and dons His uniform; and though he prove a deserter or traitor, he is His soldier still, and punishable as such. And once advanced to Holy Orders, the priest is a priest of God forever, according to the order of Melchisedech.

Q. Why can we not receive Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders more than once?
A. We cannot receive Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders more than once, because they imprint a character in the soul.

A Duke who Gave his Nobles the Lower Places at Table

A certain German duke who lived in the eighth century, and was converted to Christianity, gave a great banquet, to which he invited not merely nobles, but also several simple commoners. Places were given

to the latter at his own table, and viands were served to them in silver dishes ; whereas the nobles were seated as far from him as possible, meats and wines being set before them in earthenware vessels. When the nobles complained of the slight thus put upon them, the duke replied: "These country folk are Christians, and through Baptism a high dignity has been conferred upon them; they are now children of God. You have not been baptized, consequently in the sight of God you are inferior in rank to them.' By means of the three above-named sacraments we enter into a spiritual relationship with God.

Q. What is the character which these sacraments imprint in the soul?

A. The character which these sacraments imprint in the soul is a spiritual mark which remains forever.

Julian the Apostate

This emperor, twenty years after his Baptism, renounced the faith and returned to paganism. Convinced that his Baptism and Confirmation had im printed a character in his soul, he took every means to rid himself of it, as it constantly reminded him of his apostasy. He had the blood of victims offered to idols poured over his head, and had recourse to many other superstitious practices to remove this character. At the last day, however, he will be judged not as a pagan but as a Christian, and therefore responsible for the abuse of the graces of the sacraments.

Q. Does this character remain in the soul even after death?

A. This character remains in the soul even after death: for the honor and glory of those who are saved; for the shame and punishment of those who are lost.

The Letters on the Gourds

A countryman had a gourd in his garden which grew upon a trellis fixed to the garden wall. There were three fruits on it; when they were quite small, about the size of rather large apples, he took his three children out with him, and in their presence with the point of a knife scratched the initial letter of their Christian names on the tender rind of the young gourds. When the autumn came, the gourds had grown very large and were of a beautiful golden color. The letters inscribed on them had grown with their growth; they were quite big and could be read very distinctly. So it is with the soul of man; the characters imprinted upon it by the three sacraments mentioned above can never be effaced.

LESSON FOURTEENTH

ON BAPTISM

Q. What is Baptism?

A. Baptism is a sacrament which cleanses us from original sin, makes us Christians, children of God, and heirs of heaven.

The Debtor's Child and the Two Letters

By Baptism we are made inheritors of heaven. A kind-hearted nobleman took into his house the child of a man who died very much in his debt, and had him carefully brought up. One day he called the boy into his presence and showed him two documents; one was on black-edged paper and sealed with black wax. The other had a red margin and a red seal. The nobleman first placed the black-edged document in the boy's hand, and bade him open it. The boy broke the seal, but when his eye fell on its contents, he turned pale and looked aghast. In it all the debts which his father left unpaid were enumerated, and besides this, all that his own education had cost his benefactor was reckoned up in plain figures. The orphaned boy was afraid of what would come next, when he saw how much both he and his father owed. But when the nobleman saw the frightened look on the child's countenance, he smiled,

and tore up the statement of the debt; then he gave him the other letter and bade him read it. It contained a full remittance of the father's debt, and what is more, an act whereby the boy was adopted by the prince as his son, and constituted his heir. The delight he felt may be imagined; he was no longer a poor orphan hampered with debts, but the son of a noble and wealthy father. Thus it is with us mortals at our Baptism; for when the debt of original sin, the legacy of our first parents, is remitted, we are made the children of God and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.

Q. Are actual sins ever remitted by Baptism?

A. Actual sins and all the punishment due to them are remitted by Baptism, if the person baptized be guilty of any.

The Baptismal Robe as a Shroud

The white robe worn at Baptism denotes the innocence which is restored to us in that sacrament. The missionaries tell us that it is the custom amongst the Chinese converts to keep with the utmost care the white veil which they wear at their Baptism, in order that on their death it may be put over their head when they are laid in the coffin. By this they intend to signify that the Christian ought to appear before God with his baptismal innocence unsullied.

Q. Is Baptism necessary to salvation?

A. Baptism is necessary to salvation, because without it we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Louis XV and his Children

Religion makes no distinction between the rich and the poor. Cleansed by the same Baptism, they have equal rights to the same favors, and he who is most faithful to his baptismal promises is greatest before God. Louis XV of France frequently inculcated this lesson on his children. Two of them had received at their birth only private Baptism, the ceremonies being supplied seven or eight years later. When the record was being made in the parish register, their father, pointing to the name which immediately preceded theirs, — which was the name of a very poor boy, — said: "You see, children, in the eyes of God all ranks and conditions are equal; there is no distinction but that of religion and virtue. One day you will be distinguished before men, and this poor boy will be unknown, but if he be more virtuous than you, he will be greater in the sight of God."

Q. Who can administer Baptism?

A. A priest is the ordinary minister of Baptism; but in case of necessity any one who has the use of reason may baptize.

A Missioner's Stratagem

A foreign missioner writes: "In the thickly populated parts of our district we appoint persons to impart Baptism when necessary. They are usually women skilled in the treatment of children's ailments and thus have easy access everywhere. They

carry with them a bottle of baptismal water, and when by their experience they judge that any child is in danger of death, they pour some water on its head, reciting at the same time the form of Baptism. In this way, in our mission, every year some seven or eight thousand children are secretly baptized, most of whom die soon after."

Q. How is Baptism given?

A. Whoever baptizes should pour water on the head of the person to be baptized, and say, while pouring the water: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Baptism by Children

A sea-captain, a Protestant, lived with his three motherless children in a Catholic family. The children of the family attended the Parochial School, and after an instruction on the necessity and manner of giving Baptism at which the captain's children also were present, the eldest of the latter said to the eldest of the former: "Are you baptized?" "Yes," replied the other, "I was baptized in my infancy." "Then," rejoined the first, "baptize me, for I might die to-night, and I want to go to heaven." This was done accordingly, and he in turn baptized his two younger sisters. When their father returned, they related what had been done, and to please them he also submitted to be baptized. Three days later he, his children, his ship, and all aboard were lost at sea.

Q. How many kinds of Baptism are there?

A. There are three kinds of Baptism: Baptism of water, of desire, and of blood.

The Baptism of Genesius

In the reign of Diocletian, there was at Rome a comic actor named Genesius who on one occasion undertook to ridicule the Christians by parodying the sacraments on the stage. Accordingly, pretending illness, he called loudly for the priest, and when another actor in that character came on and asked wherefore he was called, Genesius replied: "Because I have a great desire for Baptism." Now it so happened that God by a miracle at that instant gave him the very desire he simulated, so that the Baptism which the supposed priest administered in jest was received by Genesius in reverent earnest. To make the mockery complete, the other players then dragged him before the emperor and with feigned gravity accused him of being a Christian; but to the astonishment of all, Genesius declared that a Christian he was in real earnest. The emperor ordered him to be tortured immediately, but nothing could shake his constancy, for he died repeating: "There is but one God, whose Son, Jesus Christ, I adore and serve, and to Him I adhere though I suffer a thousand deaths." His, indeed, was a triple Baptism, of desire, of water, and of blood. "And," says St. John I. v. 8, "there are three that give testimony on earth, the spirit and the water and the blood; and these three are one."

Q. What is Baptism of water?

A. Baptism of water is that which is given by pouring water on the head of the person to be baptized, and saying at the same time: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

St. Francis and the Font

St. Francis of Sales would often lead his young companions to the parish church and arrange them round the font where in infancy they had been baptized. "See," he would say, "this is the spot that should be dearer to us than any other, dearer even than our birthplace; for there we were born in sin, but here we were made children of God." Then after reciting the Doxology in thanksgiving to God, they would disperse and return to their games.

Q. What is Baptism of desire?

A. Baptism of desire is an ardent wish to receive Baptism, and to do all that God has ordained for our salvation.

The Widow's Son

At Uzale a widow had an only son, and so desirous was she of making him a good Christian that she persuaded him to join the ranks of the Catechumens. In the meantime, however, he suddenly sickened, and died, and the pious desire of each for his Baptism was frustrated. Still the mother ceased not to pray God to restore him to life, saying: "Thou knowest, O God, why I wish him back again." God heard her prayer, for the young man returned to life, received Baptism, Confirmation, and the Last Sacra-

ments, and once more gave up his soul to God. Needless to say, the widow shed no tears at his second death.

Q. What is Baptism of blood?

A. Baptism of blood is the shedding of one's blood for the faith of Christ.

The Martyred Catechumens

It was very common in the early ages of the Church for converts under instruction to devote themselves for a year or two to mission work among the heathen as a preparation for holy Baptism. It thus very often happened that these Catechumens fell into the hands of the enemies of Christianity, and shed their blood for the faith they were endeavoring to spread. They had not indeed been initiated into the Church by the laver of water, but they were baptized by their own desire and with their own blood.

Q. Is Baptism of desire or of blood sufficient to produce the effects of Baptism of water?

A. Baptism of desire or of blood is sufficient to produce the effects of Baptism of water, if it is impossible to receive the Baptism of water.

Baptism under Difficulties

Three men were traveling across the deserts of Arabia, two Christians and a Catechumen, when the latter took sick and was likely to die. Of the other two, one had lost both arms, and the other was deaf

and dumb. The dying man begged for Baptism, but there was no water to be had for hundreds of miles. As is well known, the Arabs are accustomed to use the fine sand of the desert for bathing purposes just as we use water. Accordingly, in their dilemma, the mute poured sand on the sick man's head, while the armless one pronounced the words of Baptism. Their intention was good, but without doubt the baptism was invalid. The man was saved, however, for he received the Baptism of desire.

Q. What do we promise in Baptism?

A. In Baptism we promise to renounce the devil, with all his works and pomps.

The Empress Elizabeth Stands Sponsor for a Peasant's Child

It is an honor to be allowed to act as sponsor. On one occasion the Empress Elizabeth, the late consort of Francis Joseph, the emperor of Austria, when out walking in the Tyrol in the vicinity of Campiglio, sat down to rest with her lady in waiting in the shade of a peasant's cottage. Observing that the inhabitants of the cottage were dressed in their holiday clothes, and seemed much annoyed about something, she asked the cause of their perturbation. She was told that arrangements had been made for the Baptism of the infant daughter of the people of the house on that day, but the godmother had not put in an appearance. On hearing this the empress expressed her willingness to take the place of the absent god-parent, and accompany the party to

church. The people gladly accepted the august lady's offer, and asked her name, in order that they might decide what name was to be given to the child. She replied evasively that her name was not one usually given in that part of the country, and they had better give their child that name which is sweetest to the ear of a Christian, the name of Mary. They then repaired to the church, where a gray-haired village pastor performed the ceremony of Baptism. When all had gone away, he looked at the register, and to his amazement saw the signature of Elizabeth, Empress of Austria. The parents of the infant were no less astonished, when, somewhat later, a servant in the imperial livery brought a valuable present from the empress to her godchild. We learn from the example of this noble lady, who was assassinated in Geneva in 1898, that it is a privilege to stand sponsor to a child at its Baptism. The Catholic Church does not admit everybody and anybody to this office.

Q. Why is the name of a saint given in Baptism?

A. The name of a saint is given in Baptism in order that the person baptized may imitate his virtues and have him for a protector.

The Archduchess Sophie Acts as Sponsor at Ischl

The mother of the present emperor of Austria, the late Archduchess Sophie, was one day walking out with her children during a summer sojourn at the baths of Ischl, when they met a countryman in his

Sunday clothes, carrying an infant in his arms. Now and again he stood still, and looked about him, as if in search of some one. The sun was hot, and beat upon the infant's face, so that it began to wail and cry. The archduchess went up to the man, and asked why he was carrying the poor child about in the heat of the noonday sun? He replied that he would not do so if he could help it. "I have come down out of the country," he said, "in order to get this child baptized in our parish church, and now I hear that the gentleman who promised to act as sponsor has left Ischl for Gmunden. I am at a loss what to do." The archduchess answered with a smile that, if that was all, she could easily set matters right; she and her husband would stand sponsors for the child. The man thought she was joking, and said she need not mock at the trouble he was in. "I mean it quite seriously," the august lady rejoined. "Let us go to the church directly; my husband is not far off." The man was only too glad to fall in with her proposal; he thanked her gratefully, saying that almighty God would reward her kindness by a blessing on her own children. The archduchess went to call her husband, the Archduke Frederic Charles, and all three went to the parish church of Ischl. The priest was not a little amazed to see the royal sponsors accompanying the lowly peasant, and the latter was still more astonished when he learned who had consented to help him out of his dilemma; in fact he was so overawed and embarrassed, that he nearly let the child fall in his confusion. He went home a happy man, enriched with many presents.

As the royal sponsors left the church the archduchess said to her husband: "That worthy peasant said God would reward us in our children; I hope and pray that his good wishes may be fulfilled." Many years have passed since then, and the blessing predicted by the countryman has not been withheld. The Emperor Francis Joseph, the son of that imperial couple, in 1898 celebrated the jubilee of his glorious reign in full mental and bodily vigor, to the joy of his loyal and loving subjects.

Q. Why are godfathers and godmothers given in Baptism?

A. Godfathers and godmothers are given in Baptism in order that they may promise, in the name of the child, what the child itself would promise if it had the use of reason.

How an Infant was Lost

It is most reprehensible for sponsors to repair to the drinking saloon immediately after the ceremony. In a certain village it was customary for sponsors after the Baptism of an infant in the nearest town where was their parish church, to betake themselves to a drinking saloon, and freely indulge in intoxicating liquors, before entering upon their homeward journey. On the return of one such party after about a four miles' drive to their own village, the mother asked to have her newly baptized infant brought to her: it was nowhere to be found. Her neighbors quickly re-harnessed the horse to the sledge and retraced their steps. They had gotten about halfway

back to the place whence they started, when they found the baby lying on the snow by the wayside. Fortunately it had sustained no material injury. This incident occurred rather more than a century ago in the district of Frautenau.

Q. What is the obligation of a godfather and a godmother?

A. The obligation of a godfather and a godmother is to instruct the child in its religious duties, if the parents neglect to do so or die.

An Infant the Prey of a Pig

Another distressing and disgraceful incident took place in the Black Forest, when the sponsors betook themselves, after the Baptism of a child, to a neighboring inn before which a barrel-organ was being played. Leaving the infant in their charge on a settle near the stove, the young people joined a group of merrymakers on the green, who were dancing to the sound of the organ. Meanwhile a pig that was roaming about entered through the open door of the room where the child had been left, — no uncommon occurrence in summer time in the Black Forest. Sniffing about for something to devour, the animal discovered the helpless infant, and pulling it down to the ground, began to bite it terribly. Owing to the noise of the dancers outside, no one heard the cries of the unhappy child. When the sponsors were tired of amusing themselves, and prepared to go home, they looked for the infant. They found the cushion on which it had been laid, and the wraps that

were round it dragged about the ground and soaked with blood; the child had been carried off and half devoured by the swine. How culpable are those who, immediately after so solemn a ceremony as Baptism, give themselves up to unseemly diversions.

LESSON FIFTEENTH

ON CONFIRMATION

Q. What is Confirmation?

A. Confirmation is a sacrament through which we receive the Holy Ghost to make us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ.

A Martyr's Fortitude

In the province of Tongking a martyr named Michael Mi displayed extraordinary courage under torture. He, together with his aged father-in-law, Anthony, was arrested for harboring a priest. At sight of the instruments of torture Anthony's courage failed, but Michael, after having himself been flogged into a mass of wounds and blood, lay down a second time and without a groan received also the old man's portion of stripes. When later both, together with the priest they had befriended, were led out to be beheaded, the executioner said to Michael: "Give me money, and I will lessen your sufferings by cutting off your head with a single blow." Michael answered: "It matters not how you behead me; as for money, I have plenty, but prefer to have it distributed among the poor." So saying, he bent his head and received the triple crown of faith, filial devotion, and charity.

Q. Who administers Confirmation?

A. The bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation.

St. Maurilius

St. Maurilius, Bishop of Angers, was one day engaged in saying Mass when a woman brought to him a sick child that he might confirm it before it died. The saint continued the Mass, but ere he had finished, the child had died. Conscience-stricken, the holy bishop resigned his see and fled to England, where he concealed himself under the guise and occupation of a gardener. Years afterward he was discovered and besought to return to his diocese; and prompted by God he did so, and also recalled the child to life, confirmed him, educated him for the priesthood and made him his successor in the See of Angers.

Q. How does the bishop give Confirmation?

A. The bishop extends his hands over those who are to be confirmed, prays that they may receive the Holy Ghost, and anoints the forehead of each with holy chrism in the form of a cross.

The Confirmations of St. Cuthbert

Country parishes can but rarely enjoy a visit from the chief pastor of the diocese, and hence such visits are usually great occasions. St. Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne, England, in the seventh century, marked all his pastoral visits with miracles. His principal care was to administer Confirmation to all baptized persons, that through the imposition of

hands they might receive the Holy Ghost. On one visit a nobleman approached, said his wife was dangerously ill, and begged the bishop to come and confirm her and administer the last rites. The bishop complied, and no sooner had he imposed hands on her and with prayer anointed her than she was restored to perfect health.

Q. What is holy chrism?

A. Holy chrism is a mixture of olive-oil and balm, consecrated by the bishop.

Holy Chrism Multiplied Miraculously

St. Pirmin, an abbot who lived in Germany in the eighth century, was one day administering Confirmation to such a large number of persons that his supply of holy chrism became exhausted. He thereupon directed one of his priests to go to the monastery and replenish the stocks, but no sooner did the priest take the sacred vessels in his hand than they were miraculously filled with oil. It is needless to say that, as the miracle became noised abroad, few unconfirmed persons in that region failed to avail themselves of the sacrament so wondrously placed within their reach.

Q. What does the bishop say in anointing the person he confirms?

A. In anointing the person he confirms the bishop says: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Two Persons Dispossessed by Confirmation

Confirmation is beneficial to the soul and sometimes to the body. St. Bout, Bishop of Clermont in France in the seventh century, was one day asked by two persons to administer to them the Sacrament of Confirmation. It so happened that these persons, though in a state of grace, were possessed by the devil, but the bishop knew it not. Immediately on receiving Confirmation, each vomited a great quantity of blood. Thus was the demon driven out of them by the presence and the power of the Holy Ghost.

Q. What is meant by anointing the forehead with chrism in the form of a cross?

A. By anointing the forehead with chrism in the form of a cross is meant that the Christian who is confirmed must openly profess and practice his faith, never be ashamed of it, and rather die than deny it.

A True Soldier of Jesus Christ

In the year 264 in the city of Cæsarea, Palestine, a soldier named Marinus, serving in the army of the Emperor Gallien, was on the point of securing a much coveted promotion when his enemies denounced him as a Christian. Asked by the emperor if this were true, he replied that it was, and thereupon was given three hours to decide which he would choose, apostasy and promotion, or fidelity to Christ and death. His bishop, Theotecue, led him to the church, administered to him the Sacrament of Confirmation, and, offering him a sword and the book of the Gospels,

said: "Choose." Marinus without hesitation took the sacred book in his hands and went out bravely to death and eternal reward.

Q. Why does the bishop give the person he confirms a slight blow on the cheek?

A. The bishop gives the person he confirms a slight blow on the cheek, to put him in mind that he must be ready to suffer everything, even death, for the sake of Christ.

The Chinese Child

A little Chinese girl met a missionary and begged him to confirm her. "But if the mandarin arrests you, what will you say?" asked the priest. "I will say I am a Christian." "And if he bids you renounce your faith, what will you do?" "I will say 'never.'" "And if he orders your head to be cut off, what will you say?" "I will say 'cut it off.'" Delighted at her excellent disposition, the missionary promptly confirmed her.

Q. To receive Confirmation worthily is it necessary to be in the state of grace?

A. To receive Confirmation worthily it is necessary to be in the state of grace.

Prayer-book, Rosary, and Picture as Confirmation Gifts

In Confirmation it is the gifts of the Holy Spirit which should be the object of desire, not the presents given by sponsors. Some years ago a Confirmation

was to be held in a country district, and several of the peasants, who had children of an age to be confirmed, went to a wealthy landed proprietor, asking him to stand sponsor for them. He expressed his willingness to comply with their request. At the same time he said: "Let me tell you beforehand that I only present to each of my godchildren a prayer-book, a rosary, and a picture — nothing more." When the day appointed for the Confirmation came near, only two out of a large number of candidates claimed the promise of the lord of the manor to act as their sponsor. After the ceremony he presented, as he had said, to each of the two a prayer-book, a rosary, and a picture — but what was the picture? A bank-note of considerable value. It may be imagined how chagrined the rest of the candidates were, when they heard what the other two had received. Thus the greed of money and self-seeking bring their own reward. It is indeed deplorable to see a sacred sacrament regarded as a source of earthly profit.

Q. What special preparation should be made to receive Confirmation?

A. Persons of an age to learn should know the chief mysteries of faith and the duties of a Christian, and be instructed in the nature and effects of this sacrament.

Caligula's Heart

The body of the Emperor Caligula was taken to be burned, according to the Roman custom. All was soon reduced to ashes except the heart, which the fire seemed unable to affect. On examination it was

found that it contained a certain poison which neutralized the effect of the fire. The fire did not fail, but the trouble was with the condition of the heart. God forbid it should be so with us when the Holy Spirit comes upon us!

Q. Is it a sin to neglect Confirmation?

A. It is a sin to neglect Confirmation, especially in these evil days when faith and morals are exposed to so many and such violent temptations.

Out of Place

Grown up persons who neglected Confirmation in their youth very often give as a reason for not coming forward that they feel so awkward and out of place in a class of small children. It would be well for them to remember that their present condition is but a figure of that which is to come when they shall stand before their Judge and answer for the neglect of their opportunities. They would do well also to remember Christ's words: "Unless you become as little children, you are not My true disciples, nor shall you enter the kingdom of heaven."

LESSON SIXTEENTH

ON THE GIFTS AND FRUITS OF THE HOLY GHOST

Q. Which are the effects of Confirmation?

A. The effects of Confirmation are an increase of sanctifying grace, the strengthening of our faith, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

The First Confirmation

A good example of the effects of Confirmation is the change produced in the apostles by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them. After Christ's crucifixion they were for the most part timid men, and kept themselves in hiding for fear of the Jews. When, however, they on Pentecost Sunday received the Holy Ghost, they no longer feared, but went forth bravely preaching Christ crucified, accounting themselves happy to suffer for the name of Jesus, and finally laying down their lives for the faith.

Q. Which are the gifts of the Holy Ghost?

A. The gifts of the Holy Ghost are Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of the Lord.

St. Paul's Simile

When St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians he was in prison at Rome, so that it was natural for

him to raise his eyes to the soldier on guard at his prison door, and from his duties and accouterments to draw a parallel between material and spiritual warfare, between the civil and the Christian warrior. "We wrestle," he says, "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the armor of God, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith wherewith to quench the fiery darts of the wicked, and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God." Thus the girdle, the breastplate, the military sandals, the shield, the helmet, and the sword of a Roman legionary, suggest the Christian's armor,—the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Q. Why do we receive the gift of Fear of the Lord?

A. We receive the gift of Fear of the Lord to fill us with a dread of sin.

The House that was Pulled Down and Rebuilt

We ought to fear God. It is related of one of the Roman emperors that he was desirous to impress a certain citizen with a sense of his power. He therefore invited him one day to dinner. During his absence from home, the emperor caused a gang of workmen to raze his house to the ground. When the man returned from the palace, he could scarcely

believe his eyes; he did not know how to contain himself for astonishment and dismay. His house had been swept off the face of the earth; the unfortunate man was inconsolable, and nearly lost his reason in his despair. Then the emperor summoned him again to the palace, and kept him there for several days. Meanwhile the builder, with a host of workmen and artisans, rebuilt the house on the same site, only the new house was a much handsomer structure than the old one. When the master again repaired to the spot and saw the commodious dwelling that had been erected for him, he could scarcely contain himself for delight; he thought it was a dream. Once more the emperor called him to his presence, and spoke thus to him: "I had your house pulled down thus quickly and no less quickly rebuilt, to show you how great my power is to injure or to benefit you. Take care therefore to keep in my favor, and beware how you offend me!" God is far mightier than that imperial ruler. Hence we ought to fear Him infinitely more, and be more desirous to please Him.

Q. Why do we receive the gift of Piety?

A. We receive the gift of Piety to make us love God as a Father and obey Him because we love Him.

The Soldier and the Orphan

A poor orphan child had been adopted by a soldier whom she called father. By her simple piety and affection she gained great influence over him; he called her his little saint; never would he smoke or

swear in her presence ; most unusual of all, she even led him to pray. One day he entered the church and found her apparently in ecstasy before the altar. The thought occurred to him that possibly she was praying for him ; he burst into tears ; his heart was changed, and completely converted. The two soon afterwards had the happiness of making together their Easter Communion. Such is the power of true piety.

Q. Why do we receive the gift of Knowledge?

A. We receive the gift of Knowledge to enable us to discover the will of God in all things.

Is the Persian King Happy?

Virtue, and not earthly possessions, renders man truly happy. Socrates, the sage, was once asked whether he considered the king of Persia a happy man. The answer he gave was this : "I cannot tell, for I do not know whether he is proficient in knowledge and virtue ; they alone make men happy."

Q. Why do we receive the gift of Fortitude?

A. We receive the gift of Fortitude to strengthen us to do the will of God in all things.

The King of Saxony's Decision

No one ought to change his creed for worldly motives. The reigning dynasty in the kingdom of Saxony is Catholic, whereas the majority of the population are Protestant. In the year 1866, after the victory of the Prussians at Königgratz, a deputation consisting of the Protestant ministers and several dis-

tinguished laymen, came to present a petition to the king requesting him to have the crown prince brought up as a Protestant, because in that case Saxony would be treated with much greater leniency by their Prussian conquerors. The king of Saxony returned this answer: "The Prussians may take my crown from me if they choose, but they cannot take my conscience." Thereupon he turned on his heel and left the apartment.

Q. Why do we receive the gift of Counsel?

A. We receive the gift of Counsel to warn us of the deceits of the devil, and of the dangers to salvation.

A Questioner Put to Shame

A pious monk named Notker, who lived at St. Gallen toward the end of the ninth century was often consulted by the Emperor Charles the Fat. A member of the emperor's suite, being jealous of the holy man, sought to humiliate him in public. Seeing him one day praying in the church, he went up to him and said aloud in a scornful manner: "Tell me, thou who art so wise and learned, what does God Almighty do up in heaven?" The servant of God replied: "I will tell you what He does. He exalts the humble and abases the proud." The bystanders laughed, and the insolent questioner went away in confusion. The same day he fell from his horse and fractured his leg. Thus we see how the Holy Ghost inspires the just with an apposite answer at the right moment. St. Notker possessed the gift of counsel.

Q. Why do we receive the gift of Understanding?

A. We receive the gift of Understanding to enable us to know more clearly the mysteries of faith.

Henry Dilson, S.J.

When Henry Dilson entered the Society of Jesus he had so little intelligence and memory that he was unable to learn or remember anything. One day, in deep affliction, he prostrated himself before the statue of Our Lady and vowed himself to her service for life. His memory all at once became retentive, and such a power of penetration into things spiritual did he gain that the most learned of the Society were in admiration of him. Our Lady's intercession had obtained for him the gift of understanding.

Q. Why do we receive the gift of Wisdom?

A. We receive the gift of Wisdom to give us a relish for the things of God, and to direct our whole life and all our actions to His honor and glory.

Demosthenes Relates a Fable

There are many who take no interest in higher things, and care only for the enjoyments of time and sense. Demosthenes, Greece's most renowned orator, was once addressing a large assembly on matters pertaining to the welfare of their common country. Although he spoke with enthusiasm and eloquence, his audience paid little attention to his discourse; some yawned, others talked to one another, or even went to sleep. Observing this, the orator left off speaking on serious subjects and related a fable about

the ass and its shadow. Instantly silence prevailed, his hearers pricked up their ears as if some matter were being propounded on which all their happiness depended. Too often Christian people act in a similar manner; they display complete indifference regarding weighty matters relating to their eternal salvation. Sermons and spiritual books have no attraction for them, yet they take a lively interest in the amusements and diversions of the day and even in such slight and trifling things as society gossip, stories in newspapers, etc. They neglect what is of primary importance and give the first place to secondary matters. What supreme folly!

Q. What are the Beatitudes?

A. The Beatitudes are:—

1st. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

A Sermon on Grandeur of Dress

St. Francis of Sales, the Bishop of Geneva, came one Lent, while on a journey, to the church attached to a monastery of Capuchin friars, which was within his diocese. He happened to arrive just at sermon time; the preacher had taken ostentation in dress as the theme of his discourse and was inveighing vehemently against prelates and ecclesiastical dignitaries, who, instead of setting an example of humility, wore splendid garments and drove about in grand equipages. When the sermon was ended, the bishop went into the sacristy, and caused the preacher to be summoned to his presence. The monk was

startled and not a little frightened when he saw the bishop standing before him. As soon as they were alone together, St. Francis said : "Reverend Father, your discourse contained much that was edifying. It may also be true that we who are in authority in the Church are guilty of sins from which the inmates of the cloister are exempt. Nevertheless, I consider it highly unwise to say such things as you did on this subject from the pulpit, to the common people. Moreover, I wish to call your attention to the fact that for many reasons it is a matter of necessity that the princes of the Church should keep up an appearance befitting their rank. Besides, you never know what may be hidden beneath a silken robe." So saying St. Francis unbuttoned the upper part of his purple cassock, and let the monk see that he wore a ragged hair shirt next to his skin. "I show you this," he added, "that you may learn that humility is quite compatible with the rich dress of one's office. From henceforth see that you are less harsh in your judgments and more prudent in your speech." If the dignitaries of the Church were wretchedly dressed, they would lose the respect due both to themselves and to their office ; they would be accused of miserliness and other faults. Therefore it is not only permissible, but obligatory upon them, to dress in accordance with the official rank they hold. What evilly disposed men choose to say must not be heeded.

2d. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.

Socrates and Xantippe

One who is meek does not fly into a passion, even when injustice is done him. Socrates, the sage of antiquity, had a horrid wife named Xantippe. One day when he was conversing with his disciples seated around the door of his house, she put her head out of a window and poured out on him a volley of abuse. Socrates, however, betrayed no sign of anger. Then the woman fetched a pitcher of water and threw it over him. Even then Socrates was unmoved; he only said quite calmly: "I might have known that such a thunderstorm would be followed by a heavy downpour of rain."

Clement Hofbauer and the Card-player

Anger is overcome by meekness. The late Clement Hofbauer, who was called the Apostle of Vienna, gave, when on a mission, a striking example of meekness. As many fathers of families had lost their lives in the Napoleonic wars, leaving their wives and children totally unprovided for, Hofbauer founded an orphanage in Warschau for the children of those who fell in battle, and went about in the town soliciting donations. On this quest he went into a restaurant, and addressing three men who were playing cards at one of the tables, asked for a contribution to the good work. One of them, an ill-bred and godless individual, spat in his face and overwhelmed him with insults. Hofbauer merely took out his handkerchief and wiped his face; he then said without the slightest sign of anger: "That was for me, sir; now let

me beg you to give me something for my orphans." This answer quieted the rude and angry man; he looked ashamed, and putting his hand into his pocket, he gave the servant of God all the money he had with him. Somewhat later he went to him to confession and became quite a changed character. Here we see how true are Our Lord's words: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land." That is, they shall gain the victory over their fellow-men.

St. Francis Xavier Continues Preaching

More is accomplished by meekness than by wrath. On one occasion when St. Francis Xavier, the Apostle of the Indies, was preaching in one of the towns of India, two heathen threw stones at him, to reduce him to silence. The saint took no notice of this, and continued preaching with an unmoved countenance. The two uncultured heathen were astonished at his meekness. They drew nearer and listened to his discourse; touched to the heart by what they heard, they were the two first converts who asked for Baptism. See the blessed effect of meekness.

3d. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

The Widow of Naim

As Jesus with His disciples was entering the city of Naim, behold a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And seeing the poor heartbroken mourner, He was

moved to pity, and He said to her: "Daughter, weep not." Then turning to the corpse, He said: "Young man, I say to thee, arise." And he that was dead sat up and began to speak; and He gave him back to his mother.

4th. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary a Mendicant

Ingratitude is the world's recompense; but sooner or later merit will be rewarded by God. St. Elizabeth of Hungary was the daughter of one of the kings of Hungary, and the wife of the Landgrave of Thuringia. During a famine in Germany (1224–1225) she daily relieved nearly nine hundred persons; and in the vicinity of the Wartburg, where was her castle, she erected a large hospice. On the death of her husband, his brother Henry seized the crown, to the exclusion of the rightful heir, Elizabeth's eldest son. Under the pretext that she squandered the revenues of the crown by her extensive almsgiving, Elizabeth was driven out of the castle, and even banished from the town, and dispossessed of all her property. The high-born lady now wandered as a beggar woman with her three children from door to door; she who had dispensed alms so liberally was everywhere rudely repulsed; not even in the hospice she had erected could she find a refuge. Only a poor shepherd's family showed her kindness. But the princess rejoiced in this; she regarded this severe trial as a special favor from God, and praised His

holy name for it. When the interment of her husband's remains took place in Bamberg, the bishop of that place spoke so forcibly in her behalf that later on she was reinstated in her rightful position. She died in 1231; her body is deposited in the chapel of the Hospital in Magdeburg. Her history affords an instance of human ingratitude.

5th. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

The Bread and Butter

With the same measure wherewith man measures out to his fellow-men will God measure to him again. A peasant used to go into the neighboring town to take the butter from his farm to supply a baker and pastry cook. He carried in five pounds daily, and took back five pounds of bread for his family. Now one day the baker thought he would weigh the butter. To his surprise he found it was half a pound short. The next morning he took the farmer to task, but the man was not in the least abashed. He answered quietly: "That was not my fault, sir; I could not help it. I have no weights in my house, so this is what I do: I put the bread that I have bought of you in one scale and my butter in the other, and thus I know when I have the right quantity." The baker was thoroughly ashamed, and from that time forth was careful to give his customers full weight. God will act toward us on the judgment day as that farmer acted. Our Lord Himself says: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

The Boy Found in the Snow

Out of gratitude alone we ought to treat animals well, for they are often instruments in saving man's life. One winter evening a farmer was driving home from the annual market in a neighboring town. On the road a little dog ran up to him, whining piteously; then it turned down a by-road, barking. As the farmer took no notice, it came up to him again, barking in a yet more demonstrative manner, and getting in front of the cart he was driving. Then it went again to the by-road, and turning round, looked appealingly at the man, who, struck by the animal's behavior, stopped his horses and followed it. At a short distance he found a boy lying unconscious on the snow, benumbed with cold. He lifted him up, carried him to his cart, wrapped him in a rug, and at the first inn he came to, inquired who the child was. The innkeeper knew him, and sent him to his parents, who lived near. They said that the boy had been sent to the market, and had probably lost his way, and, overcome with cold and weariness, had been unable to reach home. Had the little dog not been with him, he would have died of exposure to the cold.

The Dogs of St. Bernard

On the frontiers of Italy and Switzerland, to the southeast of the lake of Geneva, is the pass of St. Bernard, over which a road leads from Switzerland into Italian territory. In days of yore hundreds of thousands of travelers passed over this road, and

even now, although communication by railroad has been opened between the two countries at this point, some twenty thousand persons annually make use of the old route, attended as it still is with considerable danger. For, on those lofty mountains, where wintry cold prevails almost all through the year and the snow never melts, the traveler may easily lose his way in a snow-storm or find the road blocked by a snow-drift; or he may he overtaken by an avalanche and be hurled into an abyss. It is also no uncommon case for travelers to be unable to proceed on their way through the effect of the intense cold. In the year 960 St. Bernard built a monastery and hospice on one of the highest points. The monastery, as it is at present, consists of a three-storied building, and the hospice attached to it is capable of accommodating four hundred guests. The yearly expenses, amounting to some 80,000 francs, are defrayed out of the funds of the convent, which has been richly endowed by benefactors. The work of the monks is to hasten to the assistance of travelers in distress, and to afford them hospitality. Consequently, when there is a heavy fall of snow, the monks ring the convent bell, to serve as a guide to wanderers who might otherwise lose their way. They also go out in different directions to assist any who may be in need of help, accompanied by the large, well-trained St. Bernard dogs. These dogs bark continuously when in search of travelers, and often find unfortunate persons buried beneath the snow. In this case they scrape the snow away, lick the hands and face of the benumbed individual,

and endeavor to restore animation to his frozen limbs by the warmth of their own bodies. If he recovers consciousness, they let him take the restoratives attached to their collars. Meanwhile they utter loud, short barks, to give notice to any monks who may be near, so that generally before long human aid is at hand, or one of the dogs will hasten back to the monastery, to call its inmates to his assistance. Immediately two Brothers set out with the necessary appliances for saving life, and carry the traveler to the hospice, where every care is taken of him. This work of charity is not without risk for the monks; sometimes they fall into crevasses and lose their lives. Nor can any endure this arduous work for more than fifteen years, although no one over twenty years of age is admitted to their number. The poor dogs, too, are sometimes sacrificed. One of them, a fine animal of extraordinary intelligence, known by the name of "Barre," saved the life of no less than forty persons in the course of a few years; the forty-first to whose help he went was alarmed at seeing him, and shot him dead. A memorial is erected in the pass to the memory of this useful and sagacious animal.

A Newfoundland Dog Saves his Master

Many instances are recorded in which a dog saved his master from robbers. The following incident occurred in the neighborhood of St. Petersburg, where a man resided who supplied the metropolis with pork. He owned a good deal of land, and carried on a large wholesale business, by which he made

a considerable amount of money. One day two peasants came to him and told him they had several hundred pigs to dispose of at a moderate price. The dealer agreed to go with them to inspect the animals; he took with him a well-filled purse, a revolver, and a large Newfoundland dog. After driving a long distance they reached a small village, and stopped before a cottage into which the merchant entered, leaving his dog outside. He hung up his fur-lined overcoat, in a pocket of which was the revolver, on a nail, and, at the request of the owner of the house, seated himself at the table to transact business. But as he was kept waiting a long time he grew impatient, and called out: "Is no one coming? I cannot waste my time here all day long." Thereupon the cottager reëntered and said: "You are not going to leave this house alive. You had better sit still." As he spoke the two peasants came in, one of whom was armed with a large, formidable looking knife. The merchant saw only too plainly that he had fallen among robbers. He besought them to spare his life, offering them all the money he had on his person. But they would not listen to a word he said. "If we let you go," they answered, "we know what it will be. You make fair promises to us now, and to-morrow the police will be after us." Then their victim entreated with tears to be allowed to take leave of his dog. To this they consented and let the dog in. His master caressed him and stroked him, till the peasants bade him be done; and as he paid no heed to them, one seized him by the arms, while the other lifted the knife to strike him. But

before the blow fell, the dog, perceiving his master's danger, sprang upon the man who held the knife, and seizing him by the throat, strangled him, so that he fell dead on the spot. Then he turned upon the other ruffian with whom his master was struggling, and fixed his teeth in his arm. Thus the merchant was enabled to free himself from his assailant, and take the revolver from his coat pocket. With it he shot the third robber dead, who had been keeping guard outside, and entered at that moment. On his way back he acquainted the police with what had occurred. Every one who heard the story, or read it in the daily papers of the time, admired the fidelity and courage of the dog who saved his master's life.

A Queen Rebukes Ragpickers

We must not allow animals to be tormented. One day the queen of the Belgians, when driving out, saw two ragpickers mercilessly belaboring a hapless dog, which was harnessed to a barrow. The queen, indignant at such cruelty, stopped her carriage, and severely reproved the owners of the dog. But these low people took the rebuke in ill part, and abused the queen, whom they probably did not recognize, in no very courteous language. Thereupon she drove straight to the police station, and ordered the ragpickers to be arrested and punished for their cruelty to animals.

A Dog's Revenge

Those who tease or torture animals seldom go unpunished. In a certain village a dog was chained

up by its owner's gate, near the road whereby the village children passed on their way to and from school. One day several of the children were going home from school when the master of the dog unchained it, intending to take it out for a walk. As soon as the animal was set free, it rushed furiously up to the group of children, and attacked a boy, tearing him with its teeth so that the blood ran down in streams. The boy had pelted the dog with stones every day as he went by; the creature remembered this and revenged itself in this way on its tormentor.

Brother Bounty and Brother Plenty

The abbot of a certain monastery was remarkably bountiful and hospitable. As long as he lived, all went well with the community, and the wealth of the monastery increased year by year. But when he was no more his successor showed himself far less generous and charitable; yet, strange to say, far from his want of liberality increasing the riches of the convent, the funds diminished so rapidly that after a while the monks actually lacked the very necessaries of life. One day a stranger came to the gate and begged for a night's lodging. The porter answered: "We really cannot take any one in now; we ourselves have scarce bread to eat. It was otherwise, formerly; the convent was well-off then." The stranger rejoined: "Since you are so unkind, no wonder that you do not prosper. You have driven away one brother, and consequently the other has forsaken you." The porter was at a loss to under-

stand this mysterious speech; he requested the stranger to explain his meaning. Thereupon he continued: "The one brother I refer to is Bounty, the other is Plenty. Since you dismissed the one, the other has taken leave of you." These words, repeated to the abbot, led him to change his conduct, and the monastery was once more famed for liberality. The abbot remembered Our Lord's words: "Give and it shall be given unto you."

6th. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.

Fair Meats on Foul Dishes

We must pray with a pure heart. A young man who had adopted a licentious manner of life did not, in spite of his vicious habits, omit to say a prayer every day to the Mother of God. One night he had a dream which made a great impression upon him. He dreamed that he was on a journey, and was extremely hungry. Our Blessed Lady then appeared to him, surrounded by angels, and offered him some tempting viands on a very dirty dish, saying: "Take this food and eat it." But he answered that he could not partake of the food because the dish on which it was served was not clean. "Thus it is with thy prayers," the Blessed Virgin rejoined. "They are good in themselves, but thy heart is impure. For this reason thy petitions are not acceptable in God's sight." At that moment the young man awoke. He never forgot that dream; it had the

effect of inducing him for the rest of his life to live as becomes a Christian.

7th. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

St. Francis of Sales in Rome

God protects the peaceable. Once when St. Francis of Sales, the Bishop of Geneva, was in Rome, he hired rooms for himself in an inn on the banks of the Tiber. The first evening he was there, on returning to the inn to sleep, he found, to his surprise, his servant in vehement altercation with the innkeeper about his apartment. The fact was, the landlord wanted to give the rooms which the bishop had engaged to a party of strangers who had just arrived. St. Francis at once put an end to the dispute. "I will have no quarrelling," he said to his servant, "Come with me; we will take up our quarters elsewhere." After a protracted and tedious search they met with suitable rooms in another inn. They had not been there long before it began to rain very heavily. In consequence of a waterspout, the Tiber was so swollen that it overflowed its banks and washed away several houses, amongst them the hostelry from which the saint had been so uncourteously expelled. Several of the inmates perished on this occasion, so that it may really be said that St. Francis of Sales owed his life to his peaceableness. Here we see the truth of Our Lord's words: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God," *i.e.* God will protect them as His children.

St. Ignatius of Loyola and Two Vessels

St. Ignatius of Loyola made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. When he was about to embark on his return to Europe, he found two ships ready to set sail, one a large vessel belonging to a Venetian, and another, a small and apparently unseaworthy bark. Ignatius wished to take his passage on the larger vessel, but the captain would not receive him on board. He mocked and derided him, saying saints did not need to embark on a ship in order to cross the seas : they had only to spread their cloak on the water and thus sail over the ocean. Ignatius bore these insults with perfect composure, and embarked on board the smaller ship in which he was carried safely to the coast of Italy, while the larger craft was wrecked off the island of Cyprus, every one of the crew and passengers being lost. Thus Ignatius owed his life to his love of peace. It is very evident that the peacemakers enjoy the special protection of the Most High.

The Money Baked in Small Loaves

In a season of scarcity a rich man used to allow the children from some of the poorest families to come to his house daily to fetch bread. A large basket filled with loaves was placed ready, and every child was allowed to take one. The very first time this was done the children quarrelled amongst themselves; every one wanted the largest loaf. One little girl only was observed to stand aloof and take the

last and smallest loaf that was left in the basket. The next day the wealthy donor of the bread had several small silver coins put into the smallest loaf before it was baked. It fell, as before, to the share of the well-behaved, peaceable little girl. But when, on cutting the loaf, her parents found the money, they told the child to take it back to their benefactor. He would not, however, take it from her, but said: "I had the money put into the loaf expressly to reward you for your peaceable conduct." God does the same; He gives peacemakers a hundred fold more — sometimes even in this life — than what they lose for the sake of peace.

8th. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

An Obedient Son

The holy martyrs are justly called conquerors. Some boys wanted to take a boat and go for a sail on the water. One of them who was to be of the party said: "I must go first and ask my mother whether I may go, for I promised her I would never go on the water without her permission." The other boys laughed at him, and called him a coward. But he answered boldly: "I should be a coward, if I let your ridicule make me commit an act of disobedience." So it was with the holy martyrs. At the first glance, it looks as if they were defeated, because they lost their lives. But in point of fact they might easily have evaded persecution if they

had been unfaithful to their God. But since they chose rather to suffer death than to deny their God, they are heroes and victors, and consequently are justly represented with palms in their hands.

Q. Which are the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost?
A. The twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost are: —

Charity.

St. Martin Divides his Cloak

What is done to the poor is done to Christ. St. Martin was originally an officer in the Roman army. One bitterly cold winter's day he was riding out of the town of Amiens in France, when at the city gates he beheld a beggar almost destitute of clothing, shivering with cold. No one had had the charity to give him a worn-out garment. Martin, moved with compassion, drew his sword and cut his warm military cloak in half, giving one piece to the beggar. He then rode on. The next night he had a dream, or rather a vision. He saw Our Lord Jesus Christ, surrounded by angels, wearing the half-cloak which had been bestowed on the beggar, and saying to the angels: "Look, this is the garment which Martin gave to me." This dream led to Martin's conversion; he was baptized, and was more liberal in almsgiving than ever. Later on he was made a bishop, and led a saintly life. This anecdote teaches us that God regards what we do to our fellow-creatures as done to Himself.

Joy.

The Weaver who Sang at his Loom

We get on with our work much better if we are cheerful when about it, and take recreation afterwards. There was once a weaver who got up very early to begin work, and while he was at work used to sing either hymns or else secular songs. As he had a loud, clear voice his neighbors needed nothing else to wake them of a morning. Now, close by the place where this weaver worked, there lived a wealthy merchant who frequently did not retire to rest until long past midnight, and consequently was much annoyed at being disturbed by this man and awakened from his sleep at an early hour every morning. He could not forbid him to sing, so he bethought himself of another means of making him quiet. He sent for the weaver, and asked him at what price he rated his singing. The man replied that it was as much to him as a day's wages. The merchant then promised him that if he would refrain from this performance for a whole month he would pay him as much as he would earn in that time. In fact he put the amount down before him then and there. The weaver was delighted at earning so large a sum so easily, and gladly agreed to the merchant's terms. Every night before going to bed he counted his treasure over and over again, he sat up gloating over it, and finally put it under his pillow lest he should be robbed of it. In the night he lay awake thinking what use he should make of it, how he could spend it to the best advantage, so that when the time

came to get up he felt tired and unrefreshed. And since in addition to this he could no longer sing at his work, he could not get on with it at all well, — in fact it became quite distasteful to him. Never had the hours passed so slowly; the day seemed an eternity to him. At last he resolved to give the merchant back his money. Without losing a moment he hastened to his residence and laid the money down before him. Then he hurried away without speaking a single word. Once more free to sing at his work, the first song he struck up ran thus: —

> "A cheerful heart and mind at rest,
> What better thing can be possessed?"

Peace.

The Broken Fence and the Eggs

Oftentimes a small sacrifice suffices to avert disputes and lawsuits. A gardener was daily annoyed by his neighbor's chickens, which got through a hole in the fence and worked sad havoc in his garden. He asked his neighbor again and again to mend the fence, but he paid no heed to the request. Any one else would have brought an action against him, — a proceeding which would certainly have given rise to hatred and hostility. The gardener, however, was a lover of peace, so he bethought himself of another means of ridding himself of the nuisance. Now and again he sent a basket of eggs in to his neighbor, saying would he be so good as to see that his hens did not lay their eggs away from home. He did this three times, then he sent no more eggs; but within a week a new fence was set up, without

any dissension or the cost of legal proceedings. His neighbor was evidently convinced that his fowls laid in the adjacent garden. Thus the gardener got his way at the cost of only three dozen eggs. He who can attain his end by peaceable means acts far more wisely than he who has recourse to open strife or lawsuits.

Patience.

The Lost Pocketbook

We ought to be patient with animals. A merchant riding home from market along a lonely road, accompanied by his dog, was all at once surprised by the behavior of that animal. Instead of running by his side, as was his wont, he began to whine and yelp, and look up at his master. As no notice was taken of this, he began to leap in front of the horse, and bite its feet. The rider gave the dog several blows with his riding-whip, but as he continued to annoy him, he thought he was mad, and taking out his revolver, he shot him and went on his way. He had proceeded a considerable distance when he discovered, to his alarm, that he had lost his pocketbook, full of bank-notes. Immediately he turned back; on coming to the spot where he had shot the dog, he found marks of blood all along the road, till he reached a place where he had dismounted to rest. There lay the pocketbook, and beside it lay the dog, mortally wounded. He could only lick his master's hand before he died. Thus, faithful to the last gasp, he had crawled back to defend the property of his thankless owner.

Benignity.

The Countess as a Mendicant

Those who are hard hearted in this world will fare ill in the next. One miserably cold winter's day, when the inclement weather caused much suffering to the poor, a lady of high rank dressed herself in ragged clothes, wrapped her head in a shawl, and taking in one hand a stick and in the other a basket, went out begging, to test the benevolence of her neighbors. At some houses she was repulsed with harsh words, at others she was given things absolutely worthless; only in one place was she treated with kindness, and that was a poor man's cottage, where she was taken into a warm room and given a piece of freshly baked cake. The next day all the people to whom the lady had gone in quest of alms were unexpectedly invited to the castle, where they were conducted by the servants into the spacious dining-hall and places assigned them at table. Before each one was placed what he or she had given to the *soi-disant* mendicant on the previous day. On the plate of one was a mouldy crust, on that of another some raw vegetables, a third had a half-rotten apple, and so on. Some of the plates were completely empty. Only two persons, an old man and his wife, were served with appetizing viands. Then the countess entered the hall and said to the astonished guests: "Yesterday I went about in the village disguised as a beggar, to test your charity. I have caused the same food to be served to you today as you gave me yesterday. Consider this, that

in the next world you will be requited in the same manner." As almost all the villagers were in the employ of the countess, and lived on her bounty, no one ventured to show his anger and annoyance. (This incident occurred in England in bygone times; the lady in question was Lady Jane Grey.)

Goodness.

Alexander the Great and the Fire

The famous monarch and general of antiquity, Alexander the Great, entertained great respect for age. During one of his winter campaigns there was a heavy fall of snow. The king had a fire lighted in his tent, as the cold was intense. While warming himself at it, he noticed an aged veteran at a short distance, shivering, and apparently benumbed with the frost. Immediately Alexander went up to him, took him by the hand, and leading him into his tent, made him sit down on the seat he had himself just vacated. As he did so, he said with a smile: "The Persians deem it a crime punishable with death for any one to seat himself on the king's throne; but I mean sitting upon my throne to be the means of saving thy life."

Long-suffering.

Phocion Condemned to Take Poison

From the annals of ancient history we learn that the Greeks rewarded with basest ingratitude almost all their heroes and patriots who had rendered eminent services to their country. Such was their

conduct in regard to the celebrated general Phocion, who forty-five times led their armies to victory in the field, and was universally respected on account of his unselfishness and incorruptibility. When eighty years of age he was accused of opposing the interests of his country, and condemned to drink poison, without being allowed even to speak in his own defense. He calmly drained the fatal cup when it was presented to him, and said to a friend who was standing by: "Tell my son not to take vengeance on the Athenians for the wrong they have done me, but to forget their injuries." Soon after the death of this noble-minded hero, the Athenians recognized the injustice of their action in his regard, and erected a monument in his honor. Here we see the truth of the saying: Ingratitude is the world's reward.

Mildness.

The Governor and the Bishop

God often punishes those who slander and insult others. Asterius, governor of Syria, toward the close of the sixth century, hated Gregory, the bishop of Antioch, a man renowned for his great sanctity, and even stirred up the populace against him. Whenever the bishop went out, and wherever he went, the passers-by in the street insulted him, throwing stones and mud at him. He was even held up to derision in the theater. The bishop complained to the emperor, and Asterius was recalled. Later on, however, he was reinstated in his office, and almost immediately after, he celebrated his nuptials in Antioch with

great festivity and popular rejoicings. But the same night there was a terrible earthquake, the greater part of the palaces and houses were thrown down. Two-thirds of the city became a heap of ruins; sixty thousand persons lost their lives, amongst them the governor and his bride. Those who seek to ruin others often meet with ruin themselves. God repays us in our own coin.

Faith.

BASLE SAVED BECAUSE OF AN EARTHQUAKE

In the fourteenth century the town of Basle in Switzerland rebelled against Duke Albert II of Austria. Soon after, it was visited by a violent earthquake, by which not merely a great number of houses and churches were destroyed, but the outer walls and fortifications of the town were overthrown. Duke Albert's councillors and courtiers told him of this exultantly; for now, they said, the town could be taken and reduced to obedience without resistance. But the duke answered with much displeasure: "Would you have me inflict further injury on those whom God has already so greatly afflicted?" Thereupon he sent four hundred men to Basle, to assist the citizens in clearing away the débris and rebuilding the ruined houses. "If, when the town is rebuilt, the authorities choose to dispute with me," the high-minded prince added, "let them do so, in God's name! But at the present juncture I will do the inhabitants no harm." Would that such mercy was always shown to those who are overtaken by misfortune, and would that such faith were more common!

Modesty.

A Laborer Conceals having Saved a Child from Drowning

Let no man boast of his good deeds. A man at work in a harbor saw a little boy fall into the water. He instantly sprang in after him and got him out. He then went on with his work, wet through as he was, until the dinner hour, when he went home to change his clothes and take his midday meal. Both in the street and in his own house he was beset with questions as to how he got his clothes so wet, but he invariably gave an evasive answer. Several days later, on returning from his work, he found awaiting him at his home the boy whom he had rescued from a watery grave, together with his parents. As soon as he crossed the threshold the boy cried out: "That is the man who pulled me out of the water!" Thereupon his parents thanked him with tears for saving their child's life. On being asked why he had kept his good deed secret, he answered in Our Lord's words: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." That man is much to be commended for his reticence; for one who prides himself on his virtuous actions or boasts of them, loses all merit in God's sight.

Continency.

The Snow-white Doves

When a certain pious girl named Georgia was dying, a great multitude of white doves were seen hovering about her. When after her death her body

was removed to the church, the doves perched on that part of the roof immediately above the corpse, and there they remained during the services. Great throngs came to see this wonderful thing, and all were persuaded that God had sent His angels under the appearance of white doves to honor her whom they had all esteemed and reverenced on account of her angelic purity.

Chastity.

The Vestal Virgins

In heathen Rome six virgins were appointed to keep alive the so-called sacred fire burning on the altar in the temple of Vesta. These virgins usually came to the temple when about ten years of age; they remained there for thirty years, during which time they were forbidden to marry. The Romans held the belief that these virgins brought good fortune to the state, by obtaining for it the protection of the gods. The Vestal Virgins were treated with the greatest respect. Military honors were paid them in public; and if a criminal, on his way to execution, chanced to meet one of them, he was set at liberty. The best places were given them at the theaters, and other entertainments at which they might be present. They were clad in white robes, adorned with purple trimming. If one of these virgins broke her vow of chastity, she was condemned to be buried alive. Hence we see in what high esteem the pagans held those who led a chaste life.

LESSON SEVENTEENTH

ON THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Q. What is the Sacrament of Penance?

A. Penance is a sacrament in which the sins committed after Baptism are forgiven.

Mercy for All

One night a woman, a social outcast and a great sinner, was passing a church, and, seeing a throng going in, she joined them. There was a vesper service, and then a sermon on God's goodness to sinners; and in the course of his remarks the preacher repeated often and with emphasis: "With God there is mercy and pardon even for the worst of sinners, if they will only repent." When the congregation had dispersed the woman lingered, and presently approaching the priest, she said: "Father, will you listen to the story of my life, and then tell me if there be hope of pardon for me?" He bade her enter the confessional, and there the poor creature, the victim of another's malice rather than her own, poured out her confession, and her heartfelt sorrow. As the night was bitterly cold, and a return to her former abode out of the question, she was permitted to stay overnight in the warm church, and there in the morning, at the foot of the statue of Jesus, they

found her dead body, with a smile of thankfulness and peace on her poor worn features.

Q. How does the Sacrament of Penance remit sin, and restore to the soul the friendship of God?

A. The Sacrament of Penance remits sin and restores the friendship of God to the soul by means of the absolution of the priest.

The Ants' Nest

A traveler, finding on his way the root of an old tree, struck it with his cane, and immediately hundreds of frightened black insects came out and ran off. The sound of the cane on the wood, though slight in itself, doubtless was to them what thunder is to us, and hence they fled in fear and confusion. The devils dwell in the sinner's soul as the ants in the old root, and the words of absolution, though pronounced in a whisper, sound to them as terrible as the thunder of God's voice, and hence they rush forth in confusion, and down into the hell whence they came.

Q. How do you know that the priest has the power of absolving from the sins committed after Baptism?

A. I know that the priest has the power of absolving from the sins committed after Baptism, because Jesus Christ granted that power to the priests of His Church when He said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them. Whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

A Protestant who Quoted Scripture in Confession

The priest has the faculty to forgive sins. The Catholic priest says to the penitent in the confessional: "I absolve thee from thy sins." The Protestant pastors, on the other hand, say to those who go to them to make a general confession: "God has forgiven you your sins." Now it happened that a Protestant merchant, who was dangerously ill, sent for a pastor with a view to obtain remission of sin. After he had confessed himself to be a sinner in a general way, the pastor said, employing the usual formula: "God has forgiven you your sins." But the sick man was not content with this. "I want you to forgive my sins," he insisted, "for we read in Holy Scripture, 'Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them.'" The clergyman explained that he had not the power to forgive sins. Then the sick man dismissed him, and sent for a Catholic priest, and asked him whether he was authorized to give remission of sin. And when the priest replied in the affirmative, he begged to be admitted into the Church, and made a full confession of all his sins before he died.

Q. How do the priests of the Church exercise the power of forgiving sins?

A. The priests of the Church exercise the power of forgiving sins by hearing the confession of sins, and granting pardon for them as ministers of God and in His name.

Father and Sons Reconciled

Two boys while playing ball near their home broke a valuable window. When their father returned and saw what was done, he was so exceedingly angry that the boys fled in dismay. They passed the day in hiding, and as night came on, feeling that such estrangement between them and their father must be removed, they returned and came before him, and, humbly penitent, confessed their fault. Their father's face, however, did not yet relax. "Are you," he asked, "truly sorry?" "We are truly sorry," they replied. "Will you promise to be more careful in the future?" "We promise." "Will you draw from your bank on the mantel sufficient money to repair the window?" "We will do that also." "Then," said he, "you are my dear boys once more." The Sacrament of Penance, far from being unnatural, follows the process of all reconciliations.

Q. What must we do to receive the Sacrament of Penance worthily?

A. To receive the Sacrament of Penance worthily we must do five things:—

1st. We must examine our conscience.

Ibycus' Cranes

The voice of conscience cannot be stifled. The following incident from the pages of antiquity testifies to the force of conscience. A celebrated poet named Ibycus was on his way to the sports which

were held on the Isthmus of Corinth, when, while he was passing through a wood, two robbers stopped him, robbed him, and in consequence of his determined self-defense, knocked him on the head and killed him. At the same moment a vast flock of cranes flew overhead in a southerly direction; Ibycus, with his last breath, called upon those cranes to bear witness to his murder and avenge his death. The two assassins then went on their way to see the sports. During a theatrical performance which was given in the open air, the crime committed by the two ruffians was brought to light in a singular manner. This is how it came to pass. The goddesses of vengeance (the Eumenides or Furies) came upon the stage, and by their song inspired all the audience with the fear of retributive justice. At the moment when this impression was fresh on the minds of all present, an immense flock of cranes darkened the sky. The two criminals looked at each other, and one of them exclaimed: "Look, Timothy, there are Ibycus' cranes!" These words attracted the attention of the bystanders, for it was already known that Ibycus had been murdered. The two men were arrested and brought to justice. The incautious murderer bitterly regretted having been surprised into uttering aloud the reproaches of his conscience; but he could not recall his words; both he and his confederate were put to death. Here we see the force of conscience.

2d. We must have sorrow for our sins.

We read of a certain holy man, that, in preparing for the reception of the Sacrament of Penance, he

was accustomed to make three stations or spiritual visits; one to hell, one to heaven, and one to Mount Calvary. In the first, from a consideration of God's hatred of sin, and the awful punishments He inflicts on it, he excited his sense of fear. Then by meditating on heaven, the reward of the sinless, he animated his hope. Finally, at the foot of the cross on Calvary he contemplated Christ's infinite mercy, and thus endeavored to conceive for his Saviour a deep and lasting love.

3d. We must make a firm resolution never more to offend God.

The Dog Wiser than his Master

A certain man of evil habits was often accompanied by his dog Phylax, when he resorted to disreputable houses. A friend one day met him without the dog and asked why that was. "Oh," he replied, "the last time I brought him where I am going to-night, he received so many kicks and blows that nothing could induce him to go there again." "Then Phylax is wiser than his master," said the other, "who, so often duped and wounded in his soul, returns to that house again and again." This is equally true of all sinners who relapse into sin through lack of an efficacious resolution of amendment.

4th. We must confess our sins to the priest.

Bishop Cheverus and the Protestant

Such confidence was inspired by Monseigneur Cheverus, first Bishop of Boston, that many refined Protes-

tant ladies were accustomed to open their consciences to him. One of them one day said that but for the necessity of going to confession she would become a Catholic. "No, no," said the bishop, "you have no such repugnance for confession as you imagine. You have been practically coming to confession to me for a long time. Confession is nothing but the revelation of the troubles of conscience, and that you have long been doing in order to receive my advice."

5th. We must accept the penance which the priest gives us.

A Wager about Confession

A party of boon companions were sitting at table in a saloon. The conversation turned upon the length of time since one and another had been to confession. Presently one of them made a bet that he would go to confession the very next morning. The wager, a gallon of ale, was accepted. On the morrow the friends repaired early to the church to see if their comrade kept his word. He made his appearance in due time, and entered the confessional. On kneeling down, he said to the priest: "Your Reverence, I have not come to confess my sins, but for the purpose of winning a bet. The matter at stake is a gallon of beer that I want to gain. As you perceive, my friends have come to see that I have duly fulfilled my part." The priest was appalled at the man's impiety; he solemnly warned him not to make a joke of the sacraments, asking him whether he was not afraid that God would chastise him for his temerity, and bidding him remember

that there was a just God who would not permit iniquity. The man answered with the utmost effrontery: "I care nothing about that." The priest then spoke to him of death, but he received the same answer: "I care nothing about that." He then reminded him of hell, and once more the same reply was returned: "I care nothing about that." Then the priest spoke to him with great solemnity, saying: "As you have done all that you had to do to win your wager, now I will also fulfill my duty. It is of course impossible for me to give you absolution, but I can lay a penance upon you. In a whole month, every morning and every night, you will repeat these words: 'There is a just God, but I care nothing for Him. I must die some day, but I care nothing about that. There is a hell for the ungodly, but I care nothing for it either.'" As soon as the man left the confessional he told his friends everything that had passed. They were agreed that he must certainly perform his penance before he could be said to have won his bet. He promised to do that also. Scarcely, however, had he repeated the prescribed words for a week, before his conscience began to awake; he began to think about God, about death, about hell. The consequence was that by the time a fortnight had passed, he went to confession in good faith, and acknowledged his past transgressions with sincere contrition. It need hardly be said that he did not mention the wager again to his former companions. If the exact performance of a penance is so profitable to one who approaches the Sacrament of Penance with no good intention, how much the more

benefit will they derive from it who receive the sacrament with proper dispositions.

Q. What is the examination of conscience?

A. The examination of conscience is an earnest effort to recall to mind all the sins we have committed since our last worthy confession.

An Unnatural Mother

The following sad incident occurred in a town in Hungary many years ago. A widow, who had a little girl about six years old, married again. The stepfather took a great dislike to this child, who was always in his way. Now in order to please her husband, the mother actually determined to get rid of her little daughter. One day she put the child into the cellar and locked the door. After two days she went to the cellar to see if she was starved to death, and called: "Annie!" The child cried out: "Mother, give me a piece of bread!" The diabolical mother hastily closed the door and went away. The next day she again went to the door, and called the child by name, and again she heard the same piteous cry: "Mother, a piece of bread." But the unnatural mother turned a deaf ear to this entreaty; she quickly closed the half-opened door and hurried away. On the third day, as she went down the steps to the cellar, she heard the unfortunate child whimpering, and repeating in a faint voice the words: "Mother, give me a bit of bread." From this she knew that the girl was still alive, but she was not moved to compassion. On the morrow the

voice was no longer audible, and going down, the barbarous woman found the child was dead. She carried her upstairs and laid her out on a bed; then she sent for the doctor, who after a hasty examination, having found no external injuries, gave a certificate of death. A great crowd of people, amongst whom were many children, attended the little girl's funeral. Before the coffin was lowered into the grave the priest, according to an old custom, recited the Our Father. When he came to the words, uttered slowly and distinctly: "Give us this day our daily bread," a loud shriek was heard, and the child's mother, pale as ashes, fell fainting to the ground. When she was restored to consciousness, it was found that her reason was entirely gone: she was a raving lunatic and had to be confined in the lunatic asylum in Presburg. At the child's funeral the voice of conscience, long stifled, made itself heard with irresistible force. How many sinners will be awakened to a sense of guilt in the presence of death!

Q. How can we make a good examination of conscience?

A. We can make a good examination of conscience by calling to memory the commandments of God, the precepts of the Church, the seven capital sins, and the particular duties of our state in life, to find out the sins we have committed.

The Two Murderers and the Cock

Two men one night climbed up by a ladder into a mill with the purpose of robbing the miller, an old

man, who was sleeping there. He was known to have money, and the robbers agreed to kill him if he made any resistance. "No cock will crow after him," they said to each other, making use of a proverbial expression signifying no one will grieve for him. At midnight, when they had just murdered the miller, a cock close by crowed so loudly that they were both startled. As soon as they had got all that they could lay hands upon, they made off. The murder created a great sensation in the neighborhood, but the criminals were not detected. About a year afterward the perpetrators of the crime were discovered. They both went to an adjacent town to the annual market, with the intention of robbing some of the well-to-do farmers. They took up their quarters for the night in a tavern. Now it happened that the room they occupied overlooked a fowl-house, and when the clock struck twelve (midnight) a cock began to crow so vociferously that it woke the two confederates. One said: "I wish I could get at that cock; I would wring the brute's neck." The other answered: "Ever since we did for that old miller, I cannot endure to hear a cock crow." Now the men were not aware that the landlord and his wife slept in the next room to theirs. They, too, had been awakened by the cock, and the partition between the rooms being very thin, the host overheard every word the culprits uttered. He got up early and gave information to the police; the men were arrested immediately, tried, and finally executed. Here we see that the crowing of a cock sufficed to awaken the conscience of an assassin.

Q. What should we do before beginning our examination of conscience?

A. Before beginning the examination of conscience we should pray to God to give us light to know our sins and grace to detest them.

The Devil's Restitution

"What are you doing there?" said St. Antoninus to the evil spirit whom he saw hovering around a penitent preparing for confession. "I am making restitution." "Restitution, indeed!" "Yes. When I wanted to lead this man into sin, I took his shame away from him; now that it is a question of confession, I am restoring it to him."

LESSON EIGHTEENTH

ON CONTRITION

Q. What is contrition, or sorrow for sin?

A. Contrition, or sorrow for sin, is a hatred of sin and a true grief of the soul for having offended God, with a firm purpose of sinning no more.

I AM NO LONGER THE SAME

Those who desire to amend must make a steadfast resolution to avoid all occasions of sin. Two young men for some time led a dissolute life in each other's company. Later on one of them forsook his evil ways, and for a long time the two saw nothing of each other. When they chanced to meet again, the one who was converted passed his former companion by without taking any notice of him. The latter accosted him, saying: "Do you not recognize me? I am so-and-so." "But I am no longer the man you knew," the other replied, "for I have completely changed my manner of life." Then he went on his way, leaving the other to ponder over what he had said. Had he engaged in conversation with him, he might perhaps have been led into sin again.

Q. What kind of sorrow should we have for our sins?

A. The sorrow we should have for our sins should be interior, supernatural, universal, and sovereign.

The Three Children

A father had three children to whom he intrusted the care of three little lambs. One day, as they were asleep, wolves bore off the lambs. The children were inconsolable, but their grief differed in its motives. "I weep," said the eldest, "because father will punish me." "And I," said the second, "because besides punishing me he will be deeply grieved." "I weep," said the youngest, "because father will be deeply afflicted, and I would rather be punished all my life than cause him pain." The children illustrate the grades of sorrow from servile fear to perfect contrition.

Q. What do you mean by saying that our sorrow should be interior?

A. When I say that our sorrow should be interior, I mean that it should come from the heart, and not merely from the lips.

A Smothered Child

A peasant woman who was sadly addicted to drink, once when intoxicated at night wrapped up her infant the wrong way, so that its head was where its feet ought to have been. When she awoke in the morning and took the baby up, it was dead; she had smothered it. In her despairing grief she tried to take her own life, but her relatives prevented her. She sought to find relief by going to confession, for her repentance was sincere. Nor was she contented with performing the penance enjoined on her by the

priest; she fasted rigorously two days every week, not taking a morsel of food until the evening. This penance she continued for the space of forty-five years, and in spite of the privation, attained the age of eighty. Happy he to whom it is given to expiate his sins in this life by voluntary penance; for on the one hand he shortens his purgatory, on the other he earns for himself an eternal reward.

Q. What do you mean by saying that our sorrow should be supernatural?

A. When I say that our sorrow should be supernatural, I mean that it should be prompted by the grace of God, and excited by motives which spring from faith, and not by merely natural motives.

The Two Criminals

Compunction is either natural or supernatural. In a certain prison two criminals were confined in the same cell. It was the first time that either of them had incurred the penalty of the law, consequently they felt their punishment deeply and were greatly depressed, even to shedding tears. "Alas!" one said, "how sadly I have disgraced myself! How could I forget myself to such an extent!" But he never thought of his offense against almighty God. The other, however, was grieved at having sinned against God. "I am sorry, O my God," he said, "that I have transgressed Thy commandment." The first delinquent felt natural contrition; he was only grieved at heart because of having brought misfortune and disgrace on himself.

Such contrition is valueless in God's sight. The second was sorry for his sin out of reverence to God; he was grieved at having offended his sovereign Lord. Contrition arising from this motive is supernatural, and real, and has merit before God. Supernatural repentance is however of two kinds; it may be perfect or imperfect. Thus sorrow for sin is either natural, because of the disastrous consequences; or supernatural, because of having displeased God. Again, supernatural contrition is imperfect, if it arises from fear of punishment; or perfect, when it arises from love of God.

Q. What do you mean by saying that our sorrow should be universal?

A. When I say that our sorrow should be universal, I mean that we should be sorry for all our mortal sins without exception.

All Idols but One Destroyed

The resolution to amend must include all sins. Chromatius, the proconsul of Rome in the reign of the Emperor Diocletian, was at one time grievously sick of a malady which was pronounced incurable. Hearing of the miracles which St. Sebastian worked in Rome at that time, he summoned the saint to his presence, and promised that, if he would cure him, he would embrace the Christian faith. Sebastian said: "Thou shalt recover, but first thou must destroy all the idols in thy house." Chromatius promised to do this. However, a few days later he sent again

for the saint, and upbraided him, saying: "Thou didst promise that I should recover my health, yet I grow worse day by day." St. Sebastian replied: "Thou hast assuredly not destroyed every one of thy false gods." The sick man acknowledged that he had retained one idol, — one only, that was made of gold and which he prized greatly. Sebastian told him that if he desired to recover his health, he must part with that idol also, even if he valued it above all his other possessions. Chromatius did so, and was cured of his disease. It is the same with the sinner. So long as he is not earnestly resolved to give up his cherished sin it will be of little use to renounce all the others.

Q. What do you mean when you say that our sorrow should be sovereign?

A. When I say that our sorrow should be sovereign, I mean that we should grieve more for having offended God than for any other evil that can befall us.

A Railroad Accident near Paderborn

About Christmas time, 1901, a terrible railway accident occurred near Paderborn in Westphalia. A horse got on the line and was cut to pieces by a passenger train. The blood and mangled remains of the animal blocked the rails and made them so slippery that the engine could not proceed. Although the driver and guard of the train were fully aware that an express train was due in five minutes' time, in the excitement of the moment they forgot to make

the necessary danger signals in order to stop it. Thus it came to pass — there was a dense fog at the time — that the express train crashed at full speed into the passenger train. Through the force of the impact the engine of the express train leaped over the last coach of the train that was stationary and fell upon a coach filled with passengers, breaking in the roof. The car caught fire, but it was impossible for the imprisoned passengers to escape. At that juncture a Franciscan monk, who himself had narrowly escaped death, with wonderful presence of mind bethought himself of affording spiritual help to the unfortunate travelers. He climbed upon the wrecked car, calling to its terrified occupants that a priest was there and would give them the last absolution. Then at the risk of his own life he recited a brief act of contrition and pronounced the absolution before exerting himself to the utmost in order to extinguish the fire and extricate the passengers from the débris of the demolished car. He refused to tell his name, although repeatedly asked to do so by those of his fellow-passengers whom he was the means of rescuing. Would that all who find themselves in danger of death — and none who travel by railway can be assured against it — would before all else think of their soul's salvation!

Q. Why should we be sorry for our sins?

A. We should be sorry for our sins, because sin is the greatest of evils and an offense against God our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, and because it shuts us out of heaven and condemns us to the eternal pains of hell.

The Representation of the "Ecce Homo"

The remembrance of Christ's passion awakens contrition. A certain priest had a picture of the "Ecce Homo" — the Redeemer wearing His crown of thorns — hung on the wall of his room near the window, and very often he stood and gazed at it. The people who lived in the opposite house observed this, and imagined that he was contemplating his own image in a mirror. One day they took the liberty of asking him to let them look in his mirror. He invited them into his room and showed them the picture. When they saw it, they were greatly ashamed of the mistake they had made. The priest took the opportunity of giving them a salutary piece of advice: "He who contemplates the Divine Saviour in His humiliation, and sees how He was chastised for our iniquities, must not only feel compassion with Him, but sorrow for the sins which caused Him to suffer. He who experiences such sorrow here will be admitted to behold the glorified countenance of the Redeemer forever in heaven."

Q. How many kinds of contrition are there?

A. There are two kinds of contrition: perfect contrition and imperfect contrition.

Two Disobedient Boys

Contrition is either perfect or imperfect. A sick man sent his two boys to the apothecary for some medicine. On their way the lads fell in with a man who was leading a dancing bear, and they ran after

him, forgetting the errand on which they were sent. Toward evening they remembered what their father had told them, bought the medicine, and hastened homeward. When they got near the house, one of the boys began to cry, saying: "I am afraid to go in, for I am sure father will flog me." The other said: "We were very wrong to run off like that and displease our good father." The former of the two boys resembles the sinner who is sorry for his sin because he foresees that he will be punished by God. The latter is an example of a sinner who has perfect contrition, who is sorry for his sin because he has thereby offended God. The repentance of the one arises from fear of God; that of the other from love of God.

Q. What is perfect contrition?

A. Perfect contrition is that which fills us with sorrow and hatred for sin, because it offends God, who is infinitely good in Himself and worthy of all love.

The Fire at a Theater in Vienna

On the 8th of December, 1881, a fire broke out in the Ring Theater in Vienna, which spread with amazing rapidity. Every one made for the doors. Unfortunately the side doors, intended for escape in case of fire, were locked, so that over four hundred persons perished in the flames. A few more fortunate individuals made their way into a corridor; amongst these was a girl who had not long left school, and who remembered having while there heard the catechist say that if they were in danger of

death they should make an act of perfect contrition. Thereupon she repeated aloud an act of contrition; after which, turning around, her hand came into contact with the latch of a door behind her. The door yielded to a slight pressure, and all who were in the corridor gained access to a room from the windows of which they could attract the attention of the people in the street, and obtain rescue by means of a fire-escape. With the exception of these favored persons, very few of those who filled the theater at the time the fire broke out were rescued from death.

Q. What is imperfect contrition?

A. Imperfect contrition is that by which we hate what offends God, because by it we lose heaven and deserve hell; or because sin is so hateful in itself.

The Accident on the Rhine near Bingen

In the spring of the year 1900 a pleasure party, consisting of about thirty persons returning from an excursion, were being conveyed across the Rhine in a boat, when, just as they were halfway, they felt themselves sinking. The boat had sprung a leak and was beginning to fill with water. A priest who was in the boat immediately called upon all the passengers to make an act of contrition and gave them the absolution. Only three persons were rescued; one of these was the priest in question. Such dangers are very often permitted by God to recall us to Himself, and rescue or disaster depends on whether or not the desired effect was produced.

Q. Is imperfect contrition sufficient for a worthy confession?

A. Imperfect contrition is sufficient for a worthy confession, but we should endeavor to have perfect contrition.

A Case of Sudden Death

It happened once that the father of a family broke a blood vessel. A messenger was instantly dispatched to summon a priest, but the nearest place where one was to be found was about four miles distant. Meanwhile the youngest child, who had recently made his first communion, perceiving that his father's life was fast ebbing away, took a crucifix down from the wall, and, holding it before the dying man's eyes, repeated aloud an act of perfect contrition. Tears filled the father's eyes; he expired before the priest arrived, but undoubtedly, on account of the real repentance he felt, he was safe for all eternity.

Q. What do you mean by a firm purpose of sinning no more?

A. By a firm purpose of sinning no more I mean a fixed resolve not only to avoid all mortal sin, but also its near occasions.

A Discharged Prisoner in Search of Employment

A young man in a house of business in Berlin had been sentenced to three years' imprisonment for embezzling. When his term had expired, he went to

take leave of the prison chaplain. During this interview he expressed the fear that he should not be able to obtain employment. The chaplain spoke encouragingly to him, and exhorted him always to keep the commandments of God, and when seeking a situation invariably to speak the truth. The young man promised to follow this advice. He went first of all to a large mercantile house and asked if employment could be given him. He was brought into the presence of the head of the business, before whom he laid his testimonials — very excellent ones. Then came the question he dreaded: "Where were you during the last three years?" The young man turned pale and answered: "I was in prison." The merchant inquired for what he had been put into prison; the answer was: "For embezzling my master's property." "You venture to say that," the master said, "and at the same time to apply for a situation?" The young man replied that on his dismissal from prison he had promised the chaplain always to speak the truth. Then the merchant, who was prepossessed in favor of the young man on account of his candor and his modest demeanor, asked him if he had also promised the chaplain to be honest and honorable in future? And when he replied in the affirmative, the master said: "Since you have kept your first promise so faithfully under very trying circumstances, I believe that you will also keep the other." He then took him into his employ. Thus what hundreds of others only obtain after weeks or months of tedious waiting, this man found on the first application, on account

of his truthfulness and sincerity, though he was at such a great disadvantage. The young man, who conducted himself in the most exemplary manner, later on paid a visit to the prison chaplain, and thanked him heartily for his good advice.

"Deceit will never succeed in the end;
Let uprightness therefore your steps attend."

The Gordian Knot

The famous conqueror of so many lands, Alexander the Great, came in one of his military expeditions to Gordium, in Phrygia. There in a certain fortress was the so-called Gordian knot, which no one could untie. The oracle had foretold that whosoever could unloose the knot would conquer the whole of Asia. Alexander did not long bethink himself; he drew his sword and cut the knot asunder. The Christian who desires to escape from the bondage of sin ought to act in like manner. He must not hesitate and vacillate to and fro, but must act with decision, and break the bonds which hold him captive to sin. Prompt action wins the fight.

Q. What do you mean by the near occasions of sin?
A. By the near occasions of sin I mean all the persons, places, and things that may easily lead us into sin.

"Go away, Father"

We ought to avoid the occasions of sin. A foreign prince once came to Cleomenes, king of Sparta, and endeavored to induce him to make a statement which would have been injurious to his country.

As Cleomenes would not consent to do this, the stranger offered him an enormous bribe. Thereupon Cleomenes' little eight-year-old daughter, who happened to be present, exclaimed: "Father, go away, or this stranger will make you do what is wrong." The king immediately left the room and refused to admit the prince any more to his presence. Had he held further intercourse with him, he might possibly have agreed to his proposal, for money blinds the eyes of men. Therefore it is the duty of every one to quit at once the occasion of sin.

LESSON NINETEENTH

ON CONFESSION

Q. What is confession?

A. Confession is the telling of our sins to a duly authorized priest, for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness.

St. John Nepomucene

The priest dare not, even under pain of death, reveal what is said in the confessional. St. John Nepomucene was the descendant of a Nepomucene family; he was ordained priest at Prague, where he preached with great eloquence and success. He was much liked by high and low, crowds flocked to listen to his sermons, and he was appointed court preacher to King Wenzel. The queen often went to hear him, and was so pleased with him that she chose him as her confessor. The king knew this, and on one occasion, being desirous to learn something which she had said in confession, he sent for St. John Nepomucene, and questioned him about it. The saint, however, would reveal nothing, despite the insistence of the king, who promised him a bishopric if he would tell him what he wished to know. Then the king grew angry and had the saint put into prison and cruelly tortured in various ways. Yet all was of no avail; John would not open his lips. When, in consequence of the queen's entreaties, he

was liberated from prison, he made a pilgrimage at once to the miraculous picture of the Mother of God at Alt-Bunzlau near Prague. Thence he derived strength to bear the fresh sufferings that awaited him on his return to Prague. Almost immediately after his arrival the king again summoned him to his presence and once more endeavored to induce him to tell him what the queen had said in confession, threatening that if he refused, he would have him thrown into the river Moldau. But not a word could he elicit from the saint. Thereupon the king bade the soldiers to take him and cast him into the Moldau that same evening. About nine o'clock at night — it was one day in March, 1393 — the king's orders were executed. The saint's feet were bound with cords and forced up to his neck, so that he was in the form of a wheel, and a wooden gag was placed in his mouth, to prevent him from uttering cries for help ; he was then conveyed to the bridge and thrown into the river. (A tablet still marks the spot upon the Karlsbrücke whence the saint was precipitated into the Moldau.) Immediately five lights appeared, shining like stars, upon the surface of the water where the body of the saint was floating. It is on account of this circumstance that the saint is often represented with five stars around his head. The king and his royal consort happened to be standing by a window of the palace overlooking the river, and they, too, remarked the five lights on the water. The king at once divined their meaning ; conscience-stricken and alarmed, he left Prague that same night, fearing lest there should be an insurrection of

the people; nor did he return until some time had elapsed. The body of the saint was found by fishermen and interred with great pomp and ceremony in the cathedral. His name alone was engraved on his tombstone. In the summer of the same year there was a famine in Bohemia, caused by prolonged drought. No rain fell for months, so that the springs dried up, and one could cross the bed of the Moldau without wetting one's feet. The people declared that this chastisement came upon them in consequence of the king's having cast St. John Nepomucene into the river. The sepulcher of the saint was much venerated, multitudes coming from far and near, among them queens and emperors, to visit it; for many miraculous cures took place there, and the fame of his sanctity was spread abroad. For this reason petitions for his canonization were presented to the Holy See. Before the process of his beatification was commenced, the remains of the saint were exhumed (in the year 1719) and a commission appointed to inspect them, consisting of bishops, priests, physicians, and professors of the university. A party of artisans, masons, locksmiths, and others were also present. When all had been sworn to speak the truth, the grave was opened: nothing but bones and ashes were discovered. The bones were carefully laid upon a table covered with a white linen cloth; likewise the skull, out of which, when the ashes were shaken, something of a reddish color, apparently a piece of flesh, to the astonishment of the bystanders, fell on to the table. One of the physicians took it into his hand, and after a minute

examination, unhesitatingly pronounced it to be a tongue, in perfect preservation. Now that more than five hundred years have passed, that tongue is still preserved in the cathedral of Prague, incorrupt to this day, in a splendid reliquary in which twelve hundred diamonds are set. It may be seen by all on the feast of the saint, May 16th, and during the following eight days, when it is exposed in the cathedral for the veneration of the faithful. The remains of the saint rest in the cathedral in a silver coffin supported by four large angels of solid silver. Close to the coffin are two silver altars at which Mass is said in honor of the saint. The stranger visiting Prague will do well to kneel awhile beside the tomb of St. John Nepomucene.

Q. What sins are we bound to confess?

A. We are bound to confess all our mortal sins, but it is well also to confess our venial sins.

A Child Stricken at the Altar

A little girl received holy communion with her companions. No one noticed anything strange about her, but when she had returned to her seat, she suddenly fell to the floor. She was hastily removed from the church, and means were taken to resuscitate her, but she lay for a long time perfectly motionless. The doctor came, but could not determine what the trouble was. When Mass was over, the priest also came to her; and when he spoke to her, she all at once opened her eyes and said: "Father, I made a bad communion this morning. When I went to confes-

sion there was one great sin I was ashamed of and neglected to tell." When she had said these words, the child turned over as though in great agony, and breathed her last.

Q. Which are the chief qualities of a good co ıfession?

A. The chief qualities of a good confession are three: it must be humble, sincere, and entire.

In the Confessional All are Equal

It is especially important that our confession be humble. The Empress Constantia (consort of the Emperor Henry VI of Germany), when in the neighborhood of Palermo, sent for the saintly Abbot Joachim to hear her confession. He found her seated on a high throne, beside which was a low chair for the priest. She expected to be allowed to make her confession while thus seated. But the abbot said: "If thou desirest to take the place of Magdalen, and I am to act as Christ's representative, thou must come down from thy throne and kneel at my feet, otherwise I shall take my departure at once." The empress did as he desired. The penitent is for the time being nothing but a lowly sinner; consequently in the confessional all titles and distinctions are dropped.

A Confessor who Would not Go to a Bishop

Galera, prince-bishop of Brixen in the first half of the nineteenth century, the author of some fifty scientific works, and one of the best bishops Austria

has ever had, was accustomed to go to confession to an aged Capuchin monk. Once when Galera was unwell — and perfect health cannot be expected in a nonagenarian — he wished to make his confession without leaving his house. So he sent a magnificent equipage to the monastery, with the request that his confessor would come to the episcopal palace, to hear his lordship's confession. The monk refused to enter the carriage, saying that unless the penitent was confined to his bed, it was his place to go to the confessor. On this message being delivered to the prince-bishop, he at once drove to the monastery, apologized to the Capuchin and humbly made his confession. In the confessional, as before the divine tribunal, differences of rank are done away with.

The Frog that Burst

Pride goes before a fall. In days of old the following fable was related. An ox was grazing near a pond where there were a number of frogs. One frog, when it saw the large animal, spoke thus boastingly to his companions: "I can make myself as big as yonder ox." Thereupon he puffed himself out with all his might. The other frogs jeered at him because he was scarcely any bigger for all his efforts. "You laugh at me," the frog exclaimed, "but I can make myself ever so much bigger." He puffed and blew himself out till he burst. Those persons who in the pride of their heart magnify themselves and want to be taken for great people are like that frog, and will surely be put to shame.

Q. When is our confession humble?

A. Our confession is humble, when we accuse ourselves of our sins, with a deep sense of shame and sorrow for having offended God.

A Royal Visit to the House of Correction

Frederic II, king of Prussia, went once upon a time to the fortress of Spandau, and visited the house of correction. He inquired of each convict, severally, what was the crime for which he was undergoing punishment. One and all declared themselves innocent of any misdeed whatsoever. There was but one exception; he answered: "I did very wrong, your Majesty. The punishment I am undergoing is not half what I deserve." "Then you have no business here among all these innocent persons," the king rejoined. "Off with you at once!" The man was forthwith set at liberty. See how candor and truthfulness are rewarded.

"I Say my Prayers, Father"

Pride destroys the merit of good works. A pious father was accustomed to read a portion of Holy Scripture before retiring to rest at night. His three sons, who were in the same room, meanwhile said their night prayers. While doing so, two of them were unable to keep awake. The third said to his father: "Look, father, my two brothers have gone to sleep, while I have been saying my prayers." The man replied: "My boy, it is better to go to sleep at your prayers than to boast of keeping awake." Good

works on which one prides one's self are worthless in God's sight.

The Proud Bootmaker

Confession is hateful to the proud because it is a humiliation. A bootmaker who had not been to confession for a long time, once said to his parish priest, when the latter urged him to approach the Sacrament of Penance: "I feel it inconsistent with my dignity to say, as I must in confession, 'I, a poor sinner.'" The priest replied: "You need not make use of those words; you may say in their place: 'I, a proud bootmaker.'"

Q. When is our confession sincere?

A. Our confession is sincere, when we tell our sins honestly and truthfully, neither exaggerating nor excusing them.

Washington and the Cherry Tree

When the famous President of the United States, Washington, was only a boy, he hacked the bark of a choice cherry tree, which his father prized very highly, with a hatchet. He injured the tree so much that it was useless. When his father saw the tree, he was extremely angry and asked who had done the mischief. All the members of his household said that they knew nothing of it; last of all the boy was asked. He answered: "Father, I cannot tell a lie; it was I who cut the tree." His father was pleased at the boy's frankness. He told him he valued truthfulness

more than a thousand cherry trees, and refrained from punishing his son. He who frankly acknowledges his fault will meet with lenient chastisement, or sometimes escape punishment altogether.

Q. When is our confession entire?

A. Our confession is entire, when we tell the number and kind of our sins and the circumstances which change their nature.

The Priest's Servant

A priest is forbidden to make any use whatever of information received by him in the confessional. The servant of a priest went to confession to his master, and among other things confessed that he had stolen corn from the granary in the presbytery. He expected that after hearing this, the priest would lock the granary door; but no, the key was left as before in the lock. The man was very much surprised to find it so. One evening when he had been drinking, on his return home he met his master, and said: "I told you in confession that I stole your corn, but you never took the key out of the barn door." "You will leave my service to-morrow," rejoined the priest. In the first instance the priest was bound by the seal of confession. In the second the case was different; there was no confession, so the priest was justified in punishing his dishonest servant. The priest is not bound to secrecy if any one speaks out of the confessional of what he has previously confessed.

Q. What should we do if we cannot remember the number of our sins?

A. If we cannot remember the number of our sins, we should tell the number as nearly as possible, and say how often we may have sinned in a day, a week, or a month, and how long the habit or practice has lasted.

The Two Pouches

If we were only a little more spiritual-minded, a little more inclined to meditate occasionally on the affairs of our soul, a little more given to the practice of occasionally examining our consciences, we should have little difficulty in remembering the number of our sins. If we were asked to enumerate our virtues and our good deeds, doubtless we would be able to give an exact account. Œsop represents man as going through life with two pouches suspended from his neck, one in front, in which he keeps his own virtues and his neighbor's faults, and the other behind, in which he hides his own faults and his neighbor's virtues. Give a hitch to the pouches occasionally; frequently settle your accounts with God in the confessional, and be sure you will find little difficulty in telling the number of your sins.

Q. Is our confession worthy if, without our fault, we forget to confess a mortal sin?

A. If without our fault we forget to confess a mortal sin, our confession is worthy, and the sin is forgiven; but it must be told in confession if it again comes to our mind.

The Ten Lepers

One day, as Our Saviour was entering a certain town, ten men who were lepers called to Him from a neighboring field: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" Doubtless there was much wanting in the dispositions which accompanied their prayer: subsequent events proved this; and yet, because they were not to blame for their ignorance, Christ acceded to their request. So, too, He cleanses us from the leprosy of sin, even though through no fault of ours our confession be incomplete. And just as He cured the lepers then and there, and yet bade them go show themselves to the priest and offer sacrifice according to the law of Moses, so also, though our forgotten sins be forgiven, He wishes us to make them known in the tribunal of penance, should they subsequently recur to our mind.

Q. Is it a grievous offense wilfully to conceal a mortal sin in confession?

A. It is a grievous offense wilfully to conceal a mortal sin in confession, because we thereby tell a lie to the Holy Ghost, and make our confession worthless.

A Chaplain's Sleepless Night

The following incident occurred in France. In a princely castle situated on an eminence, a suite of apartments was appropriated to the chaplain. One evening he heard a loud knock at the outer door, and, on opening it, he saw a man who said he wished to go to confession, as he had an important communi-

cation to make to the chaplain. The latter brought him into his room, and prepared to hear his confession. Then the man told him that a plot had been formed to blow up the castle with dynamite that very night at one o'clock, and he had been selected to execute the fatal design. The priest used every argument he could think of to prevail upon him to relinquish the execution of this project, but all in vain; the man would not be deterred from the accomplishment of his promise. In consequence of this the priest refused to give him absolution, and he left the castle. Who can conceive the agony of apprehension in which the priest passed that night. It need hardly be said that he remained in the castle: in fact, he went to bed as usual, and prepared himself for death. He heard the hours go by, eleven, twelve, — at last one o'clock struck. Every moment he expected the dreaded catastrophe; how slowly the minutes crept by! At length the clock chimed a quarter past, then half past, finally two struck; the fateful hour had gone by. The priest felt relieved; he thought perhaps, after all, his persuasions had taken effect, and the man had abandoned his criminal design. At daybreak a knock was again heard at the door of the priest's apartments. Looking out of the window to see who was there, he perceived the same man who had come to him on the preceding evening, and who asked again to be admitted. This man then said: "I wanted to convince myself that the seal of confession was strictly observed by priests, and I took this means of ascertaining the fact. All night long I stood outside your door,

watching to see whether, after what I told you, you would hasten away from the castle. As you remained here quietly, I no longer doubt the reality of the secrecy observed in the confessional. Until I had assured myself of this, I was afraid to go to confession, as I am a great sinner; but now I will make a clean breast of all my misdeeds." The seal of confession takes away the last excuse of the sinner in the sight of God.

Q. What must he do who has wilfully concealed a mortal sin in confession?

A. He who has wilfully concealed a mortal sin in confession must not only confess it, but must also repeat all the sins he has committed since his last worthy confession.

St. Angela of Foligna

Angela of Foligna had in her youth the misfortune to conceal some mortal sins in confession. Fear and shame long closed her lips, but one day she fervently invoked her favorite saint, St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis instantly appeared to her, and directed her as to what she was to do. Next morning she followed his advice, made a general confession, and so repaired the past. Forthwith a great peace and intense joy filled her heart, and from that moment she advanced rapidly in virtue all, through God's mercy, she died in the odor of sanctity. Open confession, they say, is good for the soul; and it is incomparably better not to confess at all than to confess sacrilegiously.

Q. Why does the priest give us a penance after confession?

A. The priest gives us a penance after confession, that we may satisfy God for the temporal punishment due to our sins.

The Revocation of Slander

It belongs to satisfaction to make reparation for any injury that has been done. In a village in Austria there lived some fifty years ago a pious widow, who gained a scanty living by needlework for herself and a child five years old. All at once no one gave her any more work ; what was more, she found that people avoided her. She could not imagine the reason of this; soon she found herself in sore straits. The little money she had put by did not last long. She and her child were reduced to beggary. Every one held aloof from her. If she went to any house to ask for assistance, she was not admitted over the threshold ; if she attempted to kiss the hand of a benefactress, the hand was hastily withdrawn as if a serpent had stung it. Once when she expressed to an acquaintance her astonishment at this treatment she everywhere met with, the person she spoke to answered curtly that she must know best what the contagious disease was she suffered from. This speech enlightened the poor woman as to the reason of the mysterious conduct of her neighbors ; she felt more depressed than ever. In her distress and destitution she could only pray earnestly for the divine assistance. About that time the Jubilee was proclaimed, and the parishioners were

called upon to approach the sacraments in order to obtain the indulgence. The confessionals were surrounded with penitents in consequence. One Sunday after Mass, as the congregation were leaving the church, the churchwarden stepped up to the poor widow who was so sorely tried, and said to her: "My good woman, you have been grievously wronged. Go to the notice board and look for yourself." She went as he told her, and on the board whereon generally only public notices and announcements relating to local matters were nailed up, she found the following letter: "I, the undersigned, hereby declare before the whole parish that, actuated by an abominable envy of one of my own calling, I calumniated the poor widow N., and spread abroad the false report that she was suffering from an infectious malady which she concealed. I revoke that statement, and humbly beg pardon of her and of all my fellow-parishioners. Anna Geuzl, seamstress." When the widow got home she found on her table a letter from the same Anna Geuzl, containing the sum of fifty gulden as damages. The poor widow at once repaired to the lodging of her rival, intending to return the money, but the woman had already left, and no one knew whither she had gone. Meanwhile the revocation of the slander remained on the notice board for all to read, and it had the desired effect of reinstating the widow in the good opinion of her neighbors. Here is seen the beneficial result of confession; but for the grace of the sacrament one could hardly imagine that the seamstress would have made such ample reparation for her fault.

Q. Does not the Sacrament of Penance remit all punishment due to sin?

A. The Sacrament of Penance remits the eternal punishment due to sin, but it does not always remit the temporal punishment which God requires as satisfaction for our sins.

The Baron Turned Trappist

We should endeavor to atone for sin during our lifetime. At the time of the Napoleonic wars, Baron von Geramb was arrested by the French in consequence of his attachment to the Austrian Imperial House, and taken as a prisoner to Vincennes, where he languished for a long period in close confinement. He was liberated in 1813, when Napoleon's power was overthrown. What did he then do? Instead of making the most of his recovered freedom, he entered the severe order of La Trappe. During his imprisonment he had had leisure and opportunity to meditate seriously upon the transitory nature of all earthly pleasures and possessions and to bewail the sins of his early years. He had, he said, learned more in solitude behind the iron door, than any amount of books could have taught him, and now desired to satisfy the divine justice for his past transgressions by the perpetual silence, the manual labor, the many hardships and privations of the life of a Trappist monk. He who makes satisfaction for his sins here on earth, not only escapes the pains of purgatory, but obtains an eternal reward for his penitential works.

Q. Why does God require a temporal punishment as a satisfaction for sin?

A. God requires a temporal punishment as a satisfaction for sin, to teach us the great evil of sin and to prevent us from falling again.

The Officer and the Fine

The habit of swearing ought to be withstood. An officer who had many good qualities had one bad habit, that of swearing. At one time when he was seriously ill he had a Sister of Charity to nurse him. She was appalled to hear how constantly he made use of oaths, and begged him to refrain from this practice. The patient declared that it was such a confirmed habit with him to swear that he could not break himself of it. The sister answered that if he chose he could soon do so. She knew an excellent means, she said. The officer inquired what it was, but she said she would not tell him unless he first gave her his word as an officer and a gentleman that he would act upon her suggestion. After a few minutes' reflection he gave her his hand, saying: "Upon my word of honor, then." "The means I want you to make use of," the sister replied, "is this: that you should give a florin [about 40 cents] to the sick poor in the hospital every time you utter an oath." The officer made a wry face, and told her that by that system she would reduce him to beggary. "No such thing," she answered. "Refrain from swearing, and you will have nothing to pay." The first time her patient let slip an oath, she held out her hand, and reminded him of his agreement. He was obliged to give her a

florin, and on that same day he had to pay five more. The next day he was only fined three times; on the third day only once. From that time forth an oath was never heard to escape his lips. How salutary severe penances are, above all those that involve pecuniary loss! If sinners were punished by fines, a great many would become reformed characters.

Q. Which are the chief means by which we satisfy God for the temporal punishment due to sin?

A. The chief means by which we satisfy God for the temporal punishment due to sin are:—

Prayer.

"Holy Father, Put in your Hand"

We ought to pray that not our will but God's will be done. One of the popes ordered a plan for a new church to be designed by an architect. When it was ready, the architect sent it by his little boy for the Holy Father's inspection. The Pope approved highly of the design, and to show his satisfaction at seeing his wishes so well carried out, he called the boy into his room, and opening a drawer which was filled with ducats, said: "Put in your hand, my boy, and take as many as you can hold." The child looked up at the Pope and said: "Holy Father, put your hand in; it is much larger than mine." Let us learn from this child how we ought to act toward almighty God. We ought not to pray that our will may be done, but rather to exclaim: "Thy will be done, O Lord." For God

knows far better than we do what is good for us, and He will do more for us than we can ask or think.

Fasting.

La Salette

On September 19th, 1846, on Mt. La Salette, in the south of France, Our Lady appeared to two young shepherds, Melany and Maximin. Her eyes were full of tears, and she complained that her Son's arm was getting so heavy she could hardly prevent it falling and crushing the world for its sins. She named three sins especially: blasphemy, profanation of Sunday, and disregard for laws of fasting and abstinence.

Almsgiving.

Command that these Stones be Made Bread

The superfluous ornaments of the rich would relieve much distress. Louis, duke of Burgundy, a grandson of the French king, Louis XIV, who was educated by the celebrated Bishop Fénelon, displayed from his earliest years great kindness of heart. At a time when provisions were very scarce in Paris, he was one day coming from Versailles when he was followed and beset by a hungry crowd, begging for alms. He gave away all the money he had with him, but still the people came flocking up in ever increasing numbers, clamoring for bread. Then he detached from his breast the decorations, set with precious stones, which he wore; and handing them to his attendant, said: "Sell these, and command that they be made bread."

A Beggar Shares with Others the Bread Given Him

In a manufacturing town both parents of a certain family worked in a factory ; they were out the whole day and only returned home in the evening. Thus the children were left alone in the house all day. One morning there was a knock at the door. One of the children ran to open it, and saw a beggar who asked for an alms. The child replied : "I have nothing to give you ; we are poor ourselves and often have nothing to eat." The mendicant went away on hearing this. In the afternoon of the same day there was again a knock at the door. The same child went to open it, and saw before him the self-same beggar. He repeated what he had said in the morning, but the beggar said : "I have not come to ask anything of you ; on the contrary, I have brought you something." He then took from his pocket several slices of bread and butter wrapped in paper, together with a few coppers, saying : "Give those to your mother. I have begged them for you." The poor are often more liberal in giving than the rich.

The Emperor Ludwig II and the Village Pastor

Almsgiving earns an eternal reward. One day, in the year 855, when the German Emperor Ludwig was out hunting, he lost his way. Toward evening he heard a bell, the Angelus, ring out from the steeple of a village church. He bent his steps in the direc

tion whence the sound came, and reached a village of the name of Katzenhausen. He went to the presbytery and begged the worthy priest, Pastor Wulfhelm, to give him a night's lodging. The priest made the unknown but distinguished guest, welcome; he entertained him hospitably, and had a bedchamber prepared for him. The next morning the stranger heard Mass, expressed his thanks to his host, and asked what he was indebted to him. Wulfhelm answered: "You are a sportsman; some time or other send me a piece of leather for a girdle." The stranger promised to do so, and took his leave. Weeks and months went by, and the village priest thought no more of his high-born guest. One day a messenger on horseback stopped at the gate of the humble presbytery, and handed in a large envelope bearing the imperial seal. This letter contained the announcement of Wulfhelm's appointment to the bishopric of Münster. God deals with us in much the same manner as this emperor did. When we have long ago forgotten acts of kindness which we performed toward the needy, He rewards them with eternal felicity.

All spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

St. John of God and the Nobleman

He who gives alms increases his property. St. John of God, founder of the order of Brothers of Mercy, erected a large hospital at Granada. A pious nobleman, residing in the town, one day sent him seven ducats for the relief of the sick and needy. On the evening of the same day the nobleman went

to the saint in the disguise of a poor man, and pleading his extreme destitution, begged with tears for assistance. St. John of God, touched with compassion, spoke kindly to him, and gave him the seven ducats he had received that morning. The next morning the nobleman went again to the saint, not in disguise, told him the whole story, and returned the ducats, multiplied ten times. From that time forth he sent him regularly every week a supply of bread and meat for the sick. God deals with us in the same way. He first sends us money and this world's goods; then He presents Himself in the person of our needy fellow-creatures, and asks of us an alms. Happy is he who has pity on the poor and destitute, for he will receive a hundred fold from God, and even in this life the Most High will be his greatest benefactor.

And the patient suffering of the ills of life.

The Emperor of Brazil Raises Funds for a Hospital

Don Pedro, emperor of Brazil, was noted for his sympathy with the poor and suffering. Being desirous of founding a large hospital in the chief town of his empire, Rio de Janeiro, in which the sick and crippled could be received, he issued an appeal for funds for this purpose; but the donations sent in were few and scanty. He therefore thought of another means of getting money. He gave notice that every one who contributed 100,000 milreïs (about $50,000) to the building should be permitted to

assume the title of baron, while the sum of 250,000 milreïs ($125,000) would entitle the donor to take the rank of count. The emperor had no longer cause to lament the lack of funds; money poured in from all sides. People who would not give from motives of humanity, were willing enough to give of their substance for the furtherance of their vanity. When the hospital was finished, on the day of its opening a great number of persons were assembled, amongst them the "new nobility." All were lavish in their praise of the vast structure, and were anxious to know what was the inscription over the principal entrance. When the curtain was removed from it, the newly created nobles read, to their shame, these words: "This building is dedicated by human vanity to human suffering." Such works of mercy, performed from selfish motives, may have praise of men, but in God's sight they are worthless.

Q. Which are the chief spiritual works of mercy?
A. The chief spiritual works of mercy are seven.
1st. To admonish the sinner.

Bishop Ambrose at the Church Door

It is a work of mercy to correct sinners. In the year 390 A.D., the Roman emperor, Theodosius the Great, punished the inhabitants of Thessalonica in a most barbarous manner for having, on the occasion of an insurrection, murdered his viceroy. He caused the citizens to be enticed into the amphitheater by proclaiming that games were to be held there. He then ordered his soldiers to massacre them all; more than

seven thousand perished in this manner. When, at a subsequent period, the emperor went to Milan and was about to enter the church, the saintly Bishop Ambrose opposed his entrance, saying: "How canst thou presume, O Emperor, to enter the house of God, and receive the body of Our Lord, since thou hast caused the death of so many persons, and hast not done penance?" The emperor excused himself by saying that David also had sinned as he had. "If thou hast imitated him in his sin, imitate him in his penance," rejoined the bishop. Theodosius retreated and did penance, by performing many acts of mercy. He did not cross the threshold of the church until a whole year had elapsed, and for the future he ruled his subjects with clemency. By acting as he did, St. Ambrose assuredly earned for himself a great reward in heaven.

2d. To instruct the ignorant.

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST AND THE BRIGAND

Reproof takes effect only when it is administered with gentleness, not in harsh tones. When St. John the Evangelist returned to Ephesus after his banishment in the isle of Patmos, he heard that a young man whom he had been the means of converting, had joined a band of robbers, and constituted himself their leader. St. John at once repaired to the mountains where they had their camp. He was soon captured by the sentries, and at his own earnest request, conducted into the presence of their chief. When the latter beheld the holy old man, he

was startled and instantly ran away from him. But St. John hastened after him, calling to him: "My son, why dost thou flee from thy father, a defenseless old man? Fear not; thou art in need of forgiveness. I, myself, will implore Christ to have mercy on thee." These loving words overcame the brigand and moved him to tears. He stood still and looked back at St. John, who went up to him, embraced him affectionately, promised him pardon, and induced him to abandon the company of the robbers. Hence we see how much influence a reproof will have if administered lovingly and mildly.

3d. To counsel the doubtful.

THE EMPEROR FRANCIS I ACTS AS GUIDE

In the Schönbrunn Park in Vienna there is a large zoölogical garden. When Francis I was emperor a great number of rare animals were brought over from Brazil. They attracted many visitors to the zoölogical garden. Among others, a general visited the park in order to see the new specimens from abroad; but being a stranger, he could not find his way. Seeing a man stooping over a flower-bed, and taking him for the head gardener, he went up to him, and touching him on the shoulder, asked him to show him the way to the garden; at the same time he put a florin into his hand. The man nodded assent, pocketed the money, and led him in the right direction. As they went along, the general looked his guide in the face; to his horror he recognized the emperor. Francis I smiled at his consternation, and said reassuringly:

"No harm done, my dear general. I am very pleased to show you the way, but you will not get back your florin. That is the first money I have earned with my wild beasts." Such obliging actions are within the reach of every one, be he rich or poor. If monarchs condescend to serve their subjects, how much the more ought those of humbler rank to oblige their equals.

4th. To comfort the sorrowful.

A General Acts as Scribe

A trifling kindness shown to another is often a work of mercy. Radetzky, the celebrated Austrian general, was known to be very kind and condescending. On this account his soldiers called him Father Radetzky. He paid a visit almost daily to the hospital, and said a few encouraging words to the sick and wounded soldiers. One day he went into the garden attached to a military hospital, where the men were who had sustained only slight wounds. There he saw a soldier in tears. He went up to him, and asked him what was the matter. The man was in trouble, because his right arm being wounded, he could not write to his mother to console her. "That is easily managed," Radetzky said. "Tell me what you wish to say to your mother, and I will write the letter for you myself." The soldier promptly accepted the offer with the greatest delight. Radetzky wrote a letter at his dictation; then he read it over to him, and asked if there was anything more to be said. As the man did not wish to add any-

thing, Radetzky folded the letter, put a bank-note in the envelope and fastened it. One can fancy how much pleasure that letter gave to the poor mother! Every one, poor or rich, has many opportunities of performing a kind action without any great sacrifice to himself.

5th. To bear wrongs patiently.

The Monk who Met Death Joyfully

God will be merciful in His judgments of those who are charitable in their judgments of others. A monk who lay on his deathbed appeared cheerful and joyous. The abbot wondered. "How is this," he asked. "You will, in all probability, soon appear before the judgment-seat of God, and yet you can be so light-hearted!" "Father," the dying man replied, "when my brethren have annoyed or wronged me in any way, I have always put the best construction on their words and actions. Since I have never judged others uncharitably, I venture to hope that I may find mercy in the presence of my Divine Judge. My trust in the hour of death is in Our Lord's words, 'Judge not, that you may not be judged.'"

6th. To forgive all injuries.

Washington's Apology

He acts most nobly who forgives his adversary and is reconciled to him. George Washington, the renowned liberator of the United States, when only twenty years of age, had a dispute with a

fellow-officer, and, as he was apt to do, expressed himself with undue vehemence. The other officer gave him a blow which felled him to the ground. Every one expected that Washington would challenge his opponent, but he did not do so. Acknowledging that he began the quarrel, he went to the officer the next day, and said : "To err is human. I insulted you yesterday, and you took satisfaction. If you consider that satisfaction sufficient, let us be friends. Here is my hand." The officer took the outstretched hand, and the two were good friends ever after.

The Emperor Francis I Escapes Assassination

Whoso has received a benefit, owes thanks in the first place to God, in the second place to his human benefactor. The conduct of the Emperor Francis Joseph I, after his preservation from an attempt at assassination, affords an admirable example of gratitude. This is what happened. In the fifth year of his reign (1853) the emperor was out walking one day, about noon ; he stopped near the Kärntner Gate and stood looking down into the moat. Suddenly a young man — an Hungarian tailor's apprentice — rushed upon him and struck him a violent blow with a poniard in the nape of the neck. Happily, the point of the dagger glanced off the clasp of the cravat which the emperor was wearing, so that it only inflicted a flesh wound about an inch deep. The assassin raised his hand to strike again, but was seized by the emperor's attendant, Colonel O'Donnell ; a townsman also ran up, so that the assailant

was arrested, and ultimately sentenced to death. The emperor was confined to his room for a whole month while the wound healed. The first time that his physicians allowed him to go out, he drove to the cathedral, to return thanks to almighty God for the preservation of his life. On that occasion the citizens of Vienna lined the streets from the royal residence to the cathedral; they were dressed in black and wore the imperial colors; the burgomaster and the municipality walked beside the carriage. At the grand entrance to St. Stephen's cathedral the emperor was received by the prince-bishop and the clergy. In thankful remembrance of his happy escape from death the splendid votive church was erected, which was twenty-five years in building, and consecrated by the prince-bishop of Vienna, assisted by forty-nine of his clergy, on the day when the imperial pair celebrated their silver wedding. When collections were made for funds to build this church, on the very first day the Viennese alone subscribed 400,000 gulden. The emperor did not forget what he owed to his deliverer, Colonel O'Donnell; he raised him to the rank of count. A few other actions which do honor to the emperor and his mother, the Archduchess Sophia, may be mentioned. When the emperor was wounded, his first thought was not of his own danger, but of his mother. To spare her grief, he begged that she might not be told of what had occurred. And when he heard that the mother of his assailant was, through her son's crime, reduced to the direst poverty, he allowed her a yearly pension. Moreover, the dow-

ager empress appointed Masses to be said for the soul of the criminal, justifying this act on the plea that no one would dare to pray for him. By these acts of benevolence the members of the imperial family did actually heap coals of fire on the heads of their enemies.

And 7th, To pray for the living and the dead.

The Result of Sixteen Years of Prayer

It is a work of mercy to pray for others. At the time of the Franco-German War (1870–1871), among other patients in the hospital of the Sisters of Mercy in France, was a German officer of rank, who had sustained very severe wounds. In fact the doctors told him plainly that his recovery was impossible. One of the nursing sisters, herself a German, asked him if she should send for a priest. The sick man said he was a Catholic, but he would not hear of going to confession. The sister said she would pray earnestly for him, until it should please God to melt his hard heart. The officer answered that she would get weary of her supplications. She then told him that for the last sixteen years she had prayed daily for the conversion of an unhappy individual, and her sisters had also prayed with the same intention, and would still continue to do so. "For sixteen years?" the officer exclaimed. "It must be some one very dear to you, — your father, perhaps, or your brother." "Nothing of the sort," the sister replied. "It is some one whom I do not

know in the least. For thirty years my mother lived with a lady of rank in Germany. Sixteen years ago that lady asked me, through my mother, to pray for the conversion of her only son, who was leading an ungodly and dissolute life. Since then we have never omitted praying for him every day. A few days ago we received a letter from the countess, his mother, informing us that her son was with the army in France." On hearing this the officer's attention was arrested. He turned to her eagerly, and inquired: "Was your mother's name Beata?" "It was," she answered; "can it be possible that you are Count Charles?" The sick man was greatly agitated. "Yes," he said, "I am. When on my departure to join my regiment my mother again besought me to lead a Christian life. I felt inclined to laugh at her admonitions, but now I could weep like a child." He perceived that through the good providence of God he had been led to his unknown benefactress; he consented to make his confession and receive the sacraments. A complete change had been wrought in him; he died in the best dispositions, with every sign of deep contrition. His mother could not sufficiently thank and praise almighty God when she heard what had occurred. How good is the counsel St. James gives: "Pray for one another, that you may be saved."

Q. Which are the chief corporal works of mercy?
A. The chief corporal works of mercy are seven.
1st. To feed the hungry.

The Testimony of a Criminal

Both cruelty toward animals and exaggerated fondness for them are apt to engender hard-heartedness toward one's fellow-man. A certain criminal when led to the gallows addressed these words to the bystanders: "In my youth I allowed myself to plague and kill brute beasts. Thus I lost all sense of humanity, and thought nothing of taking a man's life; so now I have brought myself to the gallows."

We are not Better, but our Circumstances are Better

The rich are bound to help the poor out of thankfulness to God. The wealthy manager of a large factory, who was much beloved on account of his extreme kindness of heart, went one winter's day to skate on the pond with his children, who had just come out of school. On the way they saw a boy carrying a basket, and picking up every morsel of coal that he could find in the street. The manager stopped and said to him: "Are not your hands very cold, my boy?" "Yes, sir," the child answered. "I am cold, but my sick mother and my little brothers and sisters at home are still colder, so I am collecting the bits of coal that fell from the coal carts to make a fire for them." The gentleman asked the boy where his mother lived, and went straight there with his children. He spoke kindly to the poor woman, gave her a liberal alms, and promised to recommend her to the care of the Society of St. Vincent of Paul. When he left the house, one of

his children said to him: "Father, those people are not our equals." He replied: "We are not better than these poor people, only our circumstances are better. We ought to be thankful to almighty God for the advantages we possess, and show our gratitude to Him by assisting our destitute brethren." These are noble sentiments, and children who have so right-minded a father are much to be congratulated.

A Sensitive Beggar

One ought to do good cheerfully. A beggar came to the door of a well-to-do farmer and asked for a midday meal. The farmer's wife brought him a basin of excellent soup, but gave it in a very cross, ungracious manner. The poor man began to eat his dinner, but while doing so his eyes filled with tears. The housewife noticed this, and asked him angrily whether there was anything amiss with the soup? The poor man, handing back to her the empty basin, replied: "Yes, the most appetizing ingredient was wanting, — a pleasant look and a kind word."

2d. To give drink to the thirsty.

The Daughter and the Dog

A lady who was walking out with her little daughter and a pet dog came to a narrow bridge without a hand-rail. She betrayed the utmost anxiety on behalf of the dog, carrying it carefully in her arms, while she let the child run over the planks, without so much as holding her hand. A man who was

passing said: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, making such a fuss about that pampered brute, and not heeding what becomes of the little girl. You do just the reverse of what you ought to do!" See how reprehensible is foolish, exaggerated fondness for animals.

The Emperor Joseph's Liberality

To give pecuniary aid to the needy is also a work of mercy. In 1872 the Emperor Francis Joseph I sojourned for some time near Meran in the Tyrol for the sake of his health. Every day he arose early, and, generally alone, dressed in ordinary clothes, he took a walk on the mountains. One day, in one of these matutinal walks, he passed by a small farm-house, whence issued cries of distress. The emperor, wondering what was the matter, looked in at the gate. There he saw in the straw yard a dead cow lying; beside it stood an aged couple, wringing their hands, and repeating: "It is all up with us now, it is all up with us!" The emperor was touched by the grief displayed by the poor old people, and resolved to succor them. He asked them accordingly what their cow was worth. The old man answered: "She was worth at least a hundred florins." "Well," the emperor replied, "cheer up. I will give you the money to buy another cow." The old people were enchanted at hearing this. They were hardly able to believe their ears. The emperor told them to go down to the castle of Trautmannsdorf, and the major-domo would pay them the money. But the old man did not seem very well satisfied at the post-

ponement of the promised gift; he wanted to go with the gentleman *at once*. The emperor could not help laughing at the old fellow's wariness; he told him he might come with him. This he did, and when near the castle the emperor met one of the officials of his court, whom he bade give the hundred florins to the peasant farmer. The good providence of God so disposed matters that the poor old folks should meet with a helping hand in their need, just as the prophet Elias succored the widow of Sarephta when in dire necessity.

3d. To clothe the naked.

The Borrowed Cloak

Good fortune attends those who help the needy. In a time of war a company of soldiers came to a village and demanded a guide. A poor day-laborer consented to show them their way. As the weather was intensely cold, he tried to borrow a cloak. But all the villagers, one after another, refused to lend him one. At last an aged man who had been driven out of house and home by the war, and now earned a scanty livelihood as a farm-laborer, agreed to lend him his old cloak. That same evening a smart officer, with many decorations on his breast, arrived in the village and asked for the old man who had lent his cloak to the guide. Poor old man, how delighted he was when he saw the officer! it was his own son. For a long time he had heard nothing of him, for the young man did not know where his father was living. That day he had heard of him in an un-

looked-for manner; he had recognized the old cloak that his father used to wear, and by questioning the guide had learned where his father was to be found. Both father and son wept tears of joy; and the by-standers who witnessed their meeting said because the old man performed that act of kindness, God had mercy on him and let him see his son again. The officer gave money to his father, and promised to provide for him from that time forth.

4th. To ransom the captive.

THE FATE OF ONE WHO TORTURED ANIMALS

A young fellow, the son of a countryman, used to take delight in plucking birds while they were alive, breaking their wings, and otherwise torturing them. He carried on these cruel practices till he was thirty years old. God punished him severely for his inhuman conduct. One day he went on business to a brewery. As he was desirous of acquainting himself with the process of brewing beer, he asked to be shown how it was done. While stooping over a vat of boiling beer, he let his hat drop in, and in endeavoring to recover it, he lost his balance and fell into the vat himself. Before he could be got out he was terribly scalded all over. A doctor was called in immediately; he did all he could for the unhappy individual, but presently gangrene set in in his feet and both had to be amputated. For twenty-five years the man lived on, a helpless cripple and invalid, a warning to others not to maltreat the lower animals. With his last breath he exhorted all young people to be kind and merciful.

The Sparrows' Friend

God rewards kindness to animals. A clerk used in the winter to make a point of throwing some bread out of his window at an early hour, before he went to his office, to feed the sparrows. He pitied the poor little things, who often found little or no food. The birds were accustomed to collect round his window every morning in expectation of their daily meal. One morning they assembled as usual, but the window was not opened. They waited in vain. Presently they began to chirp and chatter, and fly restlessly to and fro, so much so as to attract the attention of the other inmates of the house. They mentioned the unusual commotion among his feathered clients to the young man's landlady; she opened the door of his room to see if anything was amiss. The room was full of the fumes of charcoal; the man was lying on his bed in a state of unconsciousness. He had over-heated his stove the night before. A doctor was quickly on the spot, and he was recalled to consciousness; had he been left half an hour longer, it would have been too late. Thus by the merciful providence of God, the little birds were instrumental in saving their benefactor's life.

5th. To harbor the harborless.

The Traveler and the Prince

A poor man on a journey once knocked at the door of a princely mansion and begged for a night's lodging. The owner of the palace happened to be pass-

ing, and hearing the request, he answered: "This is not a hostelry." The pilgrim replied: "Permit me to ask your Excellency three questions; then I will go on my way." The prince bade him say on. The traveler inquired: "Who lived in this house before you?" "My father," was the reply. "And who occupied it before him?" "My grandfather," the prince answered. Once more the stranger put the question: "And who will inhabit it after you?" To this the prince could make no reply, and his interlocutor continued: "Then if each person only lives for a certain space of time in this castle, and then gives place to another, what are you but passing guests? Thus this house may rightly be called an inn. Do not, therefore, spend too much money on the embellishment of the mansion in which you will reside but a short time. Let me counsel you rather to be charitable to the poor, in order to provide yourself with a permanent dwelling-place in the heavens." The prince laid this good advice to heart, and rewarded the pilgrim for it. Man is truly while on earth only the steward of the earthly goods given to him for his use during a limited period.

The Last Kreutzer for the Homeless

The poor are often more self-denying than the rich. At one time inundations were very frequent in the Tyrol, because the river Inn, swollen by the melted snow, overflowed its banks. Many villages were so devastated that after the subsidence of the water they were not to be recognized. A collection was on one occasion being made in a neighboring

district for the benefit of the sufferers from the inundation. The collectors on their quest came to a house where a poor widow with a large family lived. As they crossed the threshold, one of them said: "We shall get nothing here; the woman is poor enough herself with that heap of children." Yet the widow, learning their errand, gave them twenty kreutzers, saying at least she and her children had a roof over their heads and beds to sleep in, whereas the unfortunate people who had lost their home had nothing. The collectors thanked her and went their way. They had not proceeded far before the widow's youngest child came running after them, saying: "We found another ten-kreutzer piece; take this too," and she put the coin into their hand. This act of generous self-denial on the part of the poor widow reminds us of the gift of the widow in the Gospel, who cast into the temple treasury two brass mites, all the living that she had.

6th. To visit the sick.

The Emperor Francis Joseph Visits the Hospital

When the cholera was raging in Vienna, the Emperor Francis I visited one of the hospitals for cholera patients. Stopping at the door, he said to one of his gentlemen in waiting. "You had better not come in; remember you are the father of a large family." The individual addressed replied: "Your Majesty is the father of millions, and consequently has more reason than myself not to expose himself

to danger." The monarch answered: "I am the father of the country, so I am the father both of those who are well and those who are sick. I am desirous of visiting my sick children. If any of your children were in the hospital, I should not oppose your going to see them."

The Emperor Joseph II in the Character of a Physician

It is a work of mercy to care for the sick. The Emperor Joseph II, the son of the renowned Empress Maria Theresa, once did a kind act in the character of a doctor. When out walking in the streets of Vienna one day, a boy came up to him crying, and begged him for a florin. The boy did not know he was addressing the emperor; he only saw in him a well-dressed gentleman. On being asked what he wanted the money for, he said he had been sent to fetch a doctor for his mother, who was ill and very poor; but the doctor would not go to see her unless a florin was paid him first. The emperor gave the boy a florin, and made minute inquiries as to the name and residence of the sick woman. While the boy ran for the doctor, the emperor betook himself to the house where the woman lived. After she had, taking him for the medical practitioner, told him what ailed her, the emperor said he would write a prescription for her; having done this, he took his leave. Shortly afterwards the doctor, whom the boy had summoned, arrived. The sick woman did not know what to think; she said the doctor had already been there, and pointed to the prescription on the table

in proof of her assertion. The physician took up the paper, and exclaimed in astonishment: "Why, my good woman, the emperor has been here! This paper is an order for twenty-five ducats payable to you." The poor woman was overwhelmed with joy. Thus the high-minded emperor put to shame the physician who would do nothing for the sick poor without previous payment.

And 7th, To bury the dead.

Emperor Francis I Acts as Mourner

It is a meritorious work to follow the dead to their last resting-place. The German emperor, Francis II, who in the year 1804 assumed the title of hereditary emperor of Austria, and is known as Francis I of Austria, was one day out walking in the streets of Vienna with one of his gentlemen in waiting, when a funeral procession met them coming out of a narrow street. A priest and an acolyte walked before the coffin; no one followed it. Then the emperor said to his attendant: "This man is greatly to be commiserated. He has no one to remember him after death and follow him to the grave." Thereupon the emperor and his attendant, removing their hats, followed the coffin as chief mourners. When the townspeople saw their monarch acting thus, they followed in his suite in hundreds, so that seldom if ever had such a funeral cortège been seen in the town as that of this unknown individual. Thus the august ruler set a noble example to his subjects, teaching them that it is a work of mercy to pay the last honors to the departed.

LESSON TWENTIETH

ON THE MANNER OF MAKING A GOOD CONFESSION

Q. What should we do on entering the confessional?

A. On entering the confessional we should kneel, make the sign of the cross, and say to the priest: Bless me, father; then add, I confess to almighty God and to you, father, that I have sinned.

The Prodigal Son

Our Lord Himself gives us a method of confession in the parable of the prodigal son. "A certain man had two sons, and the younger, taking his portion, went abroad and wasted his substance, living riotously. Then set in a famine, and he became a feeder of swine, and with them he ate of the husks. And entering into himself, he said: 'How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father!' And rising up he came to his father and said: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am not now worthy to be called thy son; make me one of thy hired servants.'"

Q. Which are the first things we should tell the priest in confession?

A. The first things we should tell the priest in confession are the time of our last confession, and whether we said the penance and went to holy communion.

The Shepherd's Sudden Death

It is related of the saintly King Louis of France that he was able to penetrate the secrets of the heart. One day, coming across a shepherd who was grazing his flock, the king looking on him said: "My son, I know the bad state of your conscience; for three years you have not been to confession. Delay no longer, I beg of you, in returning to God, for death is already at your door." The shepherd, astonished, hastened in terror to follow the king's advice; he made a good confession, and three days later died suddenly in the very field where the king had accosted him.

Q. After telling the time of our last confession and communion what should we do?

A. After telling the time of our last confession and communion we should confess all the mortal sins we have since committed, and all the venial sins we may wish to mention.

The Pharisee and the Publican

Some people think they should confess their virtues only. If we cannot remember any sin since our last confession, we should mention some sin of our past life. If we have the right disposition, we shall never be at a loss for something to confess. "Two men," says Christ, "went up into the temple to pray. And one standing prayed thus: 'O God, I thank Thee that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, nor such as this publican. I fast twice a

week and give tithes of all I possess.' But the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift his eyes, but struck his breast, saying: 'O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' I say to you," concludes Christ, "this man went down to his house justified rather than the other."

Q. What must we do when the confessor asks us questions?

A. When the confessor asks us questions we must answer them truthfully and clearly.

A Rash Judgment in the Confessional

The priest rejoices when a sinner makes a good confession. One day a man went to confession to St. Louis Bertrand, an inmate of the Dominican monastery at Valencia in Spain, and accused himself of many grave offenses. Each time that he mentioned a mortal sin he gave a sharp glance at his confessor, to see if he betrayed any astonishment. The saint, however, remained perfectly calm and unmoved; the expression of his countenance did not alter even in the least. When the penitent had finished his confession, he added: "I have still one sin more to confess which I have committed since I entered the confessional; it is that of rash and uncharitable judgment in regard to your Reverence. Because you retained your composure, and your countenance did not exhibit the slightest sign of surprise at what I said, I suspected that you had yourself been guilty of similar offenses to those I confessed." The saint answered him thus: "My dear son in Christ Jesus,

I can assure you that I never committed a single one of the sins which you confessed. It is true that I listened with perfect composure to the statement of your transgressions, but this was not because I felt no horror at your sins, but because I felt joy at your repentance. I was grieved that you should have offended against almighty God so deeply, but I rejoiced with the holy angels in heaven at your penitent dispositions; I rejoiced because I perceived from your sincere confession of sin, that you are returning to your heavenly Father with the sentiments of the prodigal son." This rejoinder on the part of the saint touched the sinner so deeply that he burst into tears. Let no one imagine that the priest in the confessional is indifferent in regard to the confessions of those who come to him. If he betrays no emotion, it is because he acts as does a civil magistrate who in the administration of justice listens to the witnesses with calmness and without previous bias, in order that he may pronounce a just verdict.

Q. What should we do after telling our sins?

A. After telling our sins we should listen with attention to the advice which the confessor may think proper to give.

"KEEP AWAY!"

A boy went into a wild beast show, where, shut up in a cage, was a fierce lion. Some attendants warned the boy not to approach the lion too closely, but to *keep away.* Paying no attention, the boy went up close, and was immediately seized and

frightfully mangled by the furious beast. Why did the boy almost lose his life? Because he would not listen to advice. Why do people sin and lose their souls? Because they do not take to heart the admonitions of their confessor, and *keep away* from temptation.

Q. How should we end our confession?

A. We should end our confession by saying, "I also accuse myself of all the sins of my past life," telling, if we choose, one or several of our past sins.

The Peasant's General Confession

St. Vincent de Paul was preparing a peasant for death, and finding that his conscience was loaded with many mortal sins which ignorance or neglect or a false shame had prevented him from confessing, he urged him to make a general confession. After some encouragement, the sick man at length declared his secret miseries, and having unburdened himself of the enormous weight, was filled with inexpressible consolation. It is advisable to make a general confession from time to time, and it is also a good practice to end each particular confession with a brief declaration of the principal sins of our past life.

Q. What should we do while the priest is giving us absolution?

A. While the priest is giving us absolution we should from our heart renew the act of contrition.

The Sorrow of Magdalen

We have in St. Magdalen a true model of repentance. She remained mute at Jesus' feet, to show us that not words but the deep emotions of the heart have value in repentance. She was at the feet of Jesus, to teach that repentance should be sanctified by humility. She bathed His feet with tears, anointed them with perfumes, and dried them with her hair, to show that we must sacrifice to repentance all that has been a cause of sin to us.

LESSON TWENTY-FIRST

ON INDULGENCES

Q. What is an indulgence?

A. An indulgence is the remission in whole or in part of the temporal punishment due to sin.

Visit to a Prison

Suppose we went to a large prison and found there a number of persons laden with chains, and condemned to painful work for twenty, forty years, or perhaps for life. And suppose we were empowered to say to them: "The President, in his goodness, is willing to shorten or even altogether remit your punishment, on condition of your saying some short prayer or doing some easy work of piety. If you accept the condition, the doors are open and you are free to rejoin your family." Would there be one, think you, to refuse the conditions? Now, the prison is purgatory, and the prisoners are sinners, debtors to God's justice. Sufferings here are nothing to the pains of purgatory, and we can shorten or altogether escape these latter by the gaining of indulgences.

Q. Is an indulgence a pardon of sin, or a license to commit sin?

A. An indulgence is not a pardon of sin, nor a license to commit sin, and one who is in a state of mortal sin cannot gain an indulgence.

A Protestant Idea of Indulgences

An indulgence does not remit mortal sin. A Catholic priest was instructing a Protestant, who was desirous of becoming a Catholic, in the doctrines of our faith. When he came to the doctrine of indulgences, he asked his catechumen what he had till then heard about indulgences, and what he considered to be the meaning of the expression "a hundred days' indulgence." The Protestant answered: "Our pastor used to say that indulgences meant remission of sin, and whoever gained a hundred days' indulgence received forgiveness of sin for that space of time, after which his transgressions would be reckoned to him anew." The priest smiled at these mistaken notions, and explained to him the real meaning of the term thus: "An indulgence can only be gained by one who is in a state of grace, — that is, who has been cleansed from mortal sin by contrition and penance. Mortal sin is not remitted by an indulgence, but only the temporal punishment is remitted which remains due to the sinner after conversion and which must be expiated. This, then, is the meaning of a hundred days' indulgence. It signifies that as much of the temporal punishment due to sin is remitted as would have been remitted by the performance during a corresponding period of the canonical penances formerly imposed upon penitents." Hence we see what false notions heretics entertain in regard to the teaching of the Catholic Church. We should study well our Christian Doctrine, so as to be able to enlighten and convert them.

Q. How many kinds of indulgences are there?

A. There are two kinds of indulgences — plenary and partial.

Penances and Indulgences

In the early ages of the Church, penances were very much more severe than those now ordinarily imposed. They usually consisted of severe fasts, wearing of sackcloth and ashes, exclusion from church during the Holy Sacrifice, etc. Some penances were called public, because they were to be performed in *public;* and others were called *canonical*, because they were imposed, not at the mere will of the confessor, but according to the Canons or laws of the Church. Thus, for breaking the Sabbath one had to fast on bread and water for three days; and ten days for talking in church. A rebellious child was punished with a penance of from three to ten years, and for ten years adulterers also did penance, while one guilty of homicide was condemned to do penance for life. During all this time these penitents were excluded from church, or made to stand at the door in penitential garb; but sometimes on account of their good dispositions their punishment was shortened or remitted altogether. In our time, therefore, a plenary indulgence is a full remission of these temporal punishments; and a partial indulgence of, say, seven years, or a hundred days, means that as much of the temporal punishment is remitted as would have been forgiven by seven years or a hundred days of the severe canonical penances of the early ages.

Q. What is a plenary indulgence?

A. A plenary indulgence is the full remission of the temporal punishment due to sin.

The First Crusade

In 1092, Pope Urban II presided over the Council of Clermont. To induce the faithful more efficaciously to take up the cross, he granted the remission of the punishment due to sin, to all who should join the crusade for the deliverance of the Holy Land, and should die in Christian sentiments in the expedition. This is the first plenary indulgence recorded in Church history.

Q. What is a partial indulgence?

A. A partial indulgence is the remission of a part of the temporal punishment due to sin.

The Pair of Scales

Blessed Berthold, having preached, was by permission of the Pope imparting to the faithful a ten days' indulgence, when a lady of rank who had been reduced to poverty came and made known to him her misery. "Go to a certain banker," he said to her, "and offer him your ten days' indulgence in return for an alms." The banker heard her with amazement, but presently asked her smilingly how much she thought the indulgence was worth. "As much as it weighs," she replied. To humor her, he brought out a pair of scales, and bade her write out her indulgence and place it on one scale, promising to deposit the price in the other. It was then the

banker had real reason to be astonished, for the paper outweighed coin after coin, and the scales became even only when the banker had deposited as much money as the lady's necessities called for.

Q. How does the Church by means of indulgences remit the temporal punishment due to sin?

A. The Church by means of indulgences, remits the temporal punishment due to sin by applying to us the merits of Jesus Christ, and the superabundant satisfactions of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the saints; which merits and satisfactions are its spiritual treasury.

The Treasury of the Church

The Church's treasury is a deposit not of bank-notes and gold and silver coins, but of spiritual merits. The merits of Our Redeemer are there, and of His Blessed Mother, and also all the superabundant merits of all the saints living and dead. Now, in the world and in purgatory are many spiritual paupers and spiritual bankrupts, and so the Church in her liberality dispenses her riches to them whenever they are willing to accept her bounty. An indulgence, therefore, is an order on the Church's treasury, indorsed by the Church, for sufficient spiritual coin to enable us to discharge our debts or pay our way into God's heavenly kingdom.

Q. What must we do to gain an indulgence?

A. To gain an indulgence we must be in the state of grace and perform the works enjoined.

The Indulgence of the Portiuncula

In October, 1221, St. Francis of Assisi, while praying in his cell, was bidden by an angel to go to the church. He there found Our Lord, His Blessed Mother, and a multitude of the saints. Our Lord said: "Francis, in return for your zeal you may ask for whatever you may think most conducive to my glory and the people's good." St. Francis then asked that all who should visit that church, after having complied with the usual conditions, should receive a plenary indulgence. Christ granted his request, but bade him go first and have it ratified by the Pope. His Holiness said: "Be it done according to your desire," but ordered that the indulgence could only be gained on one day. Our Lord appeared again to St. Francis and directed that the day should be that on which St. Peter was miraculously freed from his chains. This again was ratified by the Pope, and solemnly proclaimed for all time. Later Popes extended the indulgence to all the churches of the Order of St. Francis.

LESSON TWENTY-SECOND

ON THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Q. What is the Holy Eucharist?

A. The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament which contains the body and blood, soul and divinity, of Our Lord Jesus Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine.

Count Rudolph of Hapsburg Gives his Horse to the Priest

We ought to show all possible respect to the adorable sacrament of the altar. Count Rudolph of Hapsburg was one day engaged in the chase with a numerous company of attendants, when the tinkle of a little bell fell on his ear. Looking around he saw a priest approaching, carrying the Blessed Sacrament to a sick person. Rudolph instantly dismounted from his horse and knelt down to adore the sacred Host. A little farther on the priest came to a brook from which the plank which afforded to foot-passengers the means of crossing it, had been carried away in consequence of heavy rain. The priest, having removed his boots, was about to wade across, when Rudolph, who had followed at a short distance, perceiving the state of the road, hastened forward, and leaping from his horse, compelled the priest to mount in his place and proceed to his destination. On the following day the clergyman brought the horse back to its owner,

and thanked him very gratefully for the kindness he had shown him. Rudolph would not take the horse again: "No," he said, "I will not again ride the steed that has had the honor of carrying my Creator and my Lord; keep it yourself and employ it in God's service." The priest thanked him, and touched by the good feeling he showed, uttered these prophetic words: "Be assured that the Most High will not fail to reward this generous act on your part, and grant high earthly honors to you and to your posterity." The pious Count Rudolph was elected Emperor of Germany in 1273; he is the founder of the Austrian imperial dynasty.

Q. When did Christ institute the Holy Eucharist?

A. Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, the night before He died.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Having washed the feet of His disciples, Jesus sat down again at table, and took bread and blessed and broke, and gave it to His disciples, saying: "Take ye and eat; this is My body." And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and He gave to them, saying: "Drink ye all of this; for this is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sin." Such was the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

Q. Who were present when Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist?

A. When Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist the twelve apostles were present.

Sacrilegious Parody on the Eucharist

On the 5th of January, 1807, in the village of Edinghausen, not far from Bielfeld in Rhenish Prussia, an impious blasphemer attempted to turn the Eucharist into derision. With twelve companions almost as wicked as himself, he sat down to table, and taking bread and wine, pronounced over them with mock solemnity the words of consecration. When he had distributed each to all, and his own turn came to partake, he became suddenly unwell, and letting his head drop on the table, he in a few moments expired. The wretch was buried outside the cemetery wall precisely on the feast of the Epiphany. May this tragical event be a salutary warning to those who scoff at the mysteries of religion.

Q. How did Our Lord institute the Holy Eucharist?

A. Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist by taking bread, blessing, breaking, and giving to His apostles, saying: "Take ye and eat. This is My body;" and then by taking the cup of wine, blessing and giving it, saying to them: "Drink ye all of this. This is My blood which shall be shed for the remission of sins Do this for a commemoration of Me."

Christ, Luther, and Zwingle in One Painting

Christ is present in the holy sacrament of the altar. Numerous, indeed, are the heretical teachers who have contested the Catholic doctrine of Our Lord's presence in the adorable sacrament of the altar, and given various interpretations to His words: "This is My

body; this is My blood." Consequently the Council of Trent declared that Christ is truly, really, and actually present in the Blessed Sacrament. He is present in the Holy Sacrament truly, consequently not, as it were, in an image; He is, moreover, really present, and not merely so in a spiritual sense; finally He is actually present and not only by the operations of His grace. An artist once conceived the idea of refuting those erroneous doctrines by means of his brush. He painted a picture wherein Christ was portrayed seated at the Last Supper, and on the same canvas were Luther and Zwingle. Beneath the picture these words were inscribed: Christ says: "This is My body." Luther says: "This will become my body." Zwingle says: "This symbolizes my body." Which of the three is right? — This brief inscription is more convincing than a multitude of arguments. (This picture was to be seen in the abbey-church of Ottobeuren in Bavaria.)

Q. What happened when Our Lord said, "This is My body; this is My blood?"

A. When Our Lord said, "This is My body," the substance of the bread was changed into the substance of His body; when He said, "This is My blood," the substance of the wine was changed into the substance of His blood.

St. Peter of Alcantara's Mass

After the consecration, Christ is present upon the altar under the forms of bread and wine. From time to time it has been recorded that Our Lord has been

seen in the sacred Host under the appearance of an infant. It is related of St. Peter of Alcantara, a Franciscan monk who lived in the sixteenth century, that he used to say Mass with singular devotion. One day the boy who served his Mass came home and told his mother that he would not serve that priest's Mass any more. His mother asked him the reason why, and the child said: "More than once I have noticed that, when I am serving on the altar, that priest has held a little child in his hands, which he consumed at the communion. I am afraid of going up to the altar with him; he might perhaps lay hold of me and want to eat me." The mother, who knew what a saintly life the monk in question led, understood what had happened and explained to her child the mystery of the apparition he had witnessed. After that he served the saint's Mass with great joy and devotion.

Q. Is Jesus Christ whole and entire both under the form of bread and under the form of wine?

A. Jesus Christ is whole and entire both under the form of bread and under the form of wine.

The Conversion of the Saxon Duke Wittekind

When Charlemagne was waging war with the Saxons, their leader, Duke Wittekind, went in disguise into the imperial camp. Whilst there he took occasion to assist with the rest of the army at the Christian worship. On the priest giving communion to the people, the heathen duke beheld a beautiful

infant in his hand. This miracle led to his conversion.

Q. Did anything remain of the bread and wine after their substance had been changed into the substance of the body and blood of Our Lord?

A. After the substance of the bread and wine had been changed into the substance of the body and blood of Our Lord there remained only the appearances of bread and wine.

Two Kings beside a Dying Bed

The God-fearing German Emperor, Ferdinand II, who occupied the throne at the time of the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War, entertained a profound reverence for the adorable sacrament of the altar. Whenever he happened to meet a priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick, he instantly alighted from his carriage or dismounted from his horse and knelt down humbly by the roadside. On one occasion, before he was created emperor, he not only dismounted from his horse, but accompanied the priest on foot to the sick man's house, remained with him while he administered the sacred Host to him, and observing that the man was poor, gave a liberal alms to the family. The priest recognized his royal companion; and before leaving the house he said to the sick man: "You have reason to congratulate yourself, my friend; for to-day two kings have honored you with a visit, the King of kings and one who is His worthy representative on earth, our beloved monarch King Ferdinand."

Q. What do you mean by the appearances of bread and wine?

A. By the appearances of bread and wine I mean the figure, the color, the taste, and whatever appears to the senses.

The Blessed Sacrament Compared to an Emperor Incognito

An officer walking out in civilian's dress met a priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick. Without hesitation he knelt down until the priest had passed. When he joined his brother officers at mess that same evening, he found they had been told of his having done so. One of them said to him: "It is not at all a becoming thing for an officer of his Majesty's army to be seen kneeling down in the public street." The other defended himself thus: "Answer me one question," he said. "If you were to meet his Majesty the Emperor in the dress of an ordinary gentleman, should you not salute him with the respect which is his due?" "Most certainly I should," the officer replied; "he is the emperor and remains the emperor whatever clothes he chooses to wear." The other then continued: "Exactly so; that is precisely what I did. I met almighty God, disguised under the appearance of bread. Should I not have been a dastardly coward if I had not paid Him the honor due to His Divine Majesty, for fear of bringing on myself the ridicule of a few persons?" No one could answer this argument. Such a conquest of human respect is greater bravery than storming a fort or dying at the cannon's mouth.

Q. What is this change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Our Lord called?

A. This change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Our Lord is called Transubstantiation.

A Queen Gives up her Carriage to a Priest

The papers relate the following praiseworthy act on the part of Queen Christine of Spain, who is also a descendant of the House of Hapsburg. One day when driving out in one of the royal carriages with her brother, they met a priest carrying the sacred Viaticum to the sick. The queen and her brother immediately alighted, caused the priest and his attendant acolyte to take their places in the carriage, while the queen followed on foot, visited the sick person, spoke kindly to her, and gave her substantial assistance. When this act became known, it excited enthusiastic admiration amongst the people.

Q. How was the substance of the bread and wine changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ?

A. The substance of the bread and wine was changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ by His almighty power.

Cannon-balls or Drops of Rain

While the fortress of Salzburg still belonged to France, in a time of war, the garrison was required to take part in the procession on the feast of Corpus Christi. But as the clouds were very stormy and there was every prospect of heavy rain, the officers

did not conceal the disinclination they felt to walk in the procession. Then the commandant said to them: "Gentlemen, I am quite certain that a shower of cannon-balls would not keep you back from going out to encounter the enemy, since you have pledged yourself to serve your earthly sovereign. Much less surely will the dread of a few drops of rain deter you from rendering a slight service to your heavenly King." These words had the desired effect. The officers at once marshaled their men in rank and file and marched with them to join the procession. The heavens were propitious; no rain fell until the feast was over. (The commandant here spoken of was the dauphin, father to the unfortunate Charles X of France.)

Q. Does this change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ continue to be made in the Church?

A. This change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ continues to be made in the Church by Jesus Christ through the ministry of His priests.

The Hungry Child's Prayer before the Tabernacle

In the season of affliction we ought to seek succor from the adorable sacrament of the altar. There was a family at one time in great destitution; for several days they had really not had bread to eat. One of the children, who had been to school and learned about the Blessed Sacrament, ran to the church, and kneeling before the high altar prayed

aloud to Our Lord in the sacred Host in these words: "Lord Jesus, we have nothing at all to eat at home. Help us, I pray Thee, or we shall die of hunger. Thou art rich and powerful; Thou canst help us poor people; Thou hast promised to assist us if we pray Thee for Thy help." From the church the boy went on his way to school. When he went home at midday, his mother met him with a pleased smile: "Your prayers have been very effectual to-day, child," she said. "Behind one of the pillars in the church there was a rich lady, who heard what you said in your prayers. She knew who you were, and came here; she gave me money and provisions. Look, here is a good dinner for you on the table." If all who are in sore distress betook themselves to the foot of the altar, there would not be so many suicides as there are now.

Q. When did Christ give His priests the power to change bread and wine into His body and blood?

A. Christ gave His priests the power to change bread and wine into His body and blood when He said to the apostles: "Do this in commemoration of Me."

The Miracle of Bolsena

In the village of Bolsena, in Italy, a priest while saying Mass allowed himself to have doubts as to the real presence. Our Lord, to lead him to better dispositions, caused the sacred Host to pour forth blood in such quantities, that the corporal and altar-cloths were all saturated. The Pope on hearing of the miracle, had the corporal taken to him, and

for many years it was solemnly carried in procession on the feast of Corpus Christi.

Q. How do the priests exercise this power of changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ?

A. The priests exercise this power of changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ through the words of consecration in the Mass, which are the words of Christ: "This is My body; this is My blood."

Transubstantiation

God can very well effect by a miracle what He does every day in the natural order. When you were born, you were not so large as you are now. Who made you grow? Is it not that what you eat is changed into your substance? Nothing is impossible to God. The same body of Jesus is in all our churches at the same time. If a mirror is broken, an image is produced in each piece, and is complete in every piece. You speak to a multitude, and your words are heard simultaneously by all present. It is unreasonable for us to accept so many natural facts which we cannot explain, and to reject the miraculous change of the substance of the bread and wine into the substance of the body and blood of Christ because it surpasses, forsooth, our comprehension.

LESSON TWENTY-THIRD

ON THE ENDS FOR WHICH THE HOLY EUCHARIST WAS INSTITUTED

Q. Why did Christ institute the Holy Eucharist?

A. Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist:—

1st. To unite us to Himself and to nourish our soul with His divine life.

2d. To increase sanctifying grace and all virtues in our soul.

3d. To lessen our evil inclinations.

4th. To be a pledge of everlasting life.

5th. To fit our bodies for a glorious resurrection.

6th. To continue the sacrifice of the cross in His Church.

The Enchanted Bread

During the cruel persecution against the Christian religion in the province of Ton-King under the tyrant Minh-Menh, the efficacy of the Holy Eucharist in sustaining the martyrs was manifest even to the infidels. While those champions of Jesus Christ were being cruelly racked and scourged, they, with the Holy Name ever on their lips, continued to profess their faith with dauntless courage. The Mandarins, amazed at such supernatural fortitude, attributed it, with truth, to the Heavenly Food of which the Christians partook in their assemblies.

"Truly," they would say, "this man has been eating of that enchanted Bread which casts a spell upon the soul."

Q. How are we united to Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist?

A. We are united to Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist by means of holy communion.

Napoleon's Happiest Day

In holy communion we are united in the closest manner to Christ. When the Emperor Napoleon I was at the zenith of his fame and fortune, his generals asked him what had been the happiest day of his life. The emperor replied: "The day of my first communion was the happiest day of my life, for then I was brought nearest to my God." The generals imagined that he would mention the day on which he had gained some brilliant victory.

Q. What is holy communion?

A. Holy communion is the receiving of the body and blood of Christ.

His Excellency is Left Outside

In the house of God it is usual to omit, for the most part, the salutations and marks of respect due to our fellow-men. A nobleman happened on a great festival to go to communion at the same Mass as his servant. In the church he dropped his glove, which the servant, noticing, came forward, picked it up and handed it to his master, saying: "Your Excellency,

you have dropped your glove." The nobleman replied in a whisper: "His Excellency is left outside. Here there are no distinctions of rank, only one Lord, the Master of us all, whom we are both going to receive." — In church we are in God's presence; before Him all men are equal.

Q. What is necessary to make a good communion?

A. To make a good communion it is necessary to be in the state of sanctifying grace and to be fasting from midnight.

The Deathbed of a Bad Communicant

In a certain town on the Rhine there lived a man so depraved that his life was a public scandal. On his deathbed, however, his family sent for the priest, who heard his confession and prepared to administer holy Viaticum. Just as he was about to receive, the sick man cried: "Stop, father, stop! My first and only communion was a sacrilegious one, and I will not have two bad communions on my conscience. To suffer hell eternally for one, is surely sufficient." In vain did the priest and the bystanders exhort him and remind him of God's infinite mercy. Sunk in the depths of despair, he after some hours expired miserably.

Q. Does he who receives communion in mortal sin receive the body and blood of Christ?

A. He who receives communion in mortal sin receives the body and blood of Christ, but does not receive His grace, and he commits a great sacrilege.

The First Bad Communion

Having promised to betray his Master for thirty pieces of silver, Judas came to the Last Supper, allowed his Master to wash his feet, received like the other apostles the body and blood of his Lord, and then went out to join the band of soldiers who were to apprehend the Saviour. But the next morning the traitor, realizing the horror of his crime, went and hanged himself in despair.

Q. Is it enough to be free from mortal sin to receive plentifully the graces of holy communion?

A. To receive plentifully the graces of holy communion it is not enough to be free from mortal sin, but we should be free from all affection to venial sin, and should make acts of lively faith, of firm hope, and ardent love.

The Two Vessels

Two children went with vessels to a spring to fetch water. One child brought back a great deal more water than the other. What was the reason? Was it because there was not water enough in the spring for both? No; it was because the one child carried a much larger vessel than the other. Two persons go to holy communion. One comes away with far more grace in his soul than the other. What is the reason? Because the one's dispositions were so much better than those of the other. By mortal sin the soul is rendered entirely incapable of holding God's grace, and by venial sin its capacity for grace is lessened.

Q. What is the fast necessary for holy communion?

A. The fast necessary for holy communion is the abstaining from midnight from everything which is taken as food or drink.

St. Juliana Falconieri

St. Juliana Falconieri, a holy virgin of the thirteenth century, was distinguished for her extraordinary devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. In her last sickness she earnestly desired to receive holy Viaticum, but from the nature of her illness it was considered impossible to comply with her request. At her entreaties, however, her confessor brought the Blessed Sacrament and laid the sacred Host on her breast. No sooner had he done so than she expired, and, wonderful to relate, the sacred Host was no longer to be seen. The Blessed Sacrament in response to her ardent love had passed into her heart, leaving upon her breast the impression of the consecrated particle. Thus did Jesus satisfy the longing of this pure soul, coming as her Viaticum to accompany her to His heavenly kingdom.

Q. Is any one ever allowed to receive holy communion when not fasting?

A. Any one in danger of death is allowed to receive communion when not fasting.

St. Francis and the Soldier

St. Francis of Sales was once preparing a garrison of soldiers for their Easter duty, when one of them thoughtlessly ate a piece of bread before receiving

the Blessed Sacrament. His comrades were shocked, and after Mass reproached him with having committed a sacrilege. The poor man, terrified at the thought, went to St. Francis and told him what had happened. "But did you do it on purpose?" asked the saint. "No, indeed," replied the soldier, "I would rather die a thousand deaths than be guilty of such a crime." "Well, then," said St. Francis, "be comforted in the assurance that you are already forgiven, and do not allow a venial sin of neglect to urge you into a mortal sin of despair." It is unwise to be too exquisitely particular about trifling things which really do not break the fast. The mouth and teeth may and should be cleansed before communion, and if some particle be thoughtlessly swallowed by way of saliva, it matters not so long as nothing is taken by way of food or drink or medicine. Our care will be much better expended in exciting ourselves to the more essential requisites for a good communion.

Q. When are we bound to receive holy communion?

A. We are bound to receive holy communion, under pain of mortal sin, during the Easter time and when in danger of death.

Omission of the Easter Precept

St. Gregory the Great was once saying Mass for one long since dead, and at the *Requiem æternam* of the *Introit* he heard a voice saying: "I shall never enjoy eternal rest or light." Thinking it a delusion, St. Gregory commenced again, but again he heard the despairing voice. He continued the Mass, how-

ever, and during the progress of it God revealed to him that the unfortunate for whom he was praying was lost eternally because, on account of some injury he had refused to pardon, he had neglected the last Easter duty he had ever had an opportunity to perform.

Q. Is it well to receive holy communion often?

A. It is well to receive holy communion often, as nothing is a greater aid to a holy life than often to receive the Author of all grace and the Source of all good.

A Criminal Condemned to Die of Starvation

Spiritual communion consists in the earnest desire to receive holy communion, and when the actual reception of the Blessed Sacrament is impossible, spiritual communions are advisable and are productive of grace. In the olden times a king once sentenced one of his subjects to be starved to death in punishment of a heinous crime. The condemned criminal besought the king to permit him to make his peace with God before paying the penalty of his sins. The king granted the desired permission, and a priest was conducted to the cell where he was confined. The man made his confession, and the priest was about to administer holy communion to him when the soldiers who were on guard in the cell interposed, saying that the man must not have anything given him to eat; he was condemned to die of hunger. The unhappy criminal fell on his knees, and exclaimed: "Lord Jesus, Thou art present here under the form of bread.

I long for Thee, but I am not allowed to receive Thee. Come to me in an invisible manner; Thou who art almighty canst do this." This man had a heartfelt desire to receive holy communion. Such a lively desire is called spiritual communion. We should communicate spiritually, when we hear Mass, at the priest's communion.

Q. What should we do after holy communion?

A. After holy communion we should spend some time in adoring Our Lord, in thanking Him for the grace we have received, and in asking Him for the blessings we need.

The Escort of Acolytes with Lighted Tapers

The Christian is bound to make an act of thanksgiving after holy communion. St. Philip Neri once observed a man who habitually left the church immediately after communicating. In order to reprove and put him to shame, he called two acolytes and bade them take two candlesticks with lighted tapers and accompany the man in question who was hastening home after receiving holy communion. The servers obeyed, and every one in the street stared at them and at the man, who, looking back and perceiving them, asked why they were following him. They said that St. Philip had ordered them to do so. He therefore returned to the church and asked the saint what was the meaning of this unwonted escort? St. Philip replied: "It is to pay proper respect to Our Lord, whom you are carrying away with you. Since you neglect to adore Him, I

sent the servers to supply your place." The man saw that he was at fault, and kneeling before the altar, made his thanksgiving most devoutly. He remained in prayer for a quarter of an hour. —No one ought to leave the church after receiving communion without having made his thanksgiving.

LESSON TWENTY-FOURTH

ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

Q. When and where are the bread and wine changed into the body and blood of Christ?

A. The bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ at the consecration in the Mass.

Sir Thomas More and the Courtier

Sir Thomas More, the celebrated Lord Chancellor of England, took great delight in serving Mass, and, though much occupied with affairs of state, he often served several in succession. On one occasion, a certain courtier, sadly deficient in faith, said to Sir Thomas that King Henry would be displeased at his lowering himself to the duties of an acolyte. "Surely," replied the chancellor, "the king cannot be displeased at the homage which I offer to *his* King."

Q. What is the Mass?

A. The Mass is the unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ.

The Child aboard Ship during a Storm

The holy sacrifice of the Mass obtains for us the remission of sin. A celebrated Spanish admiral,

Alfonso de Albuquerque, was once out at sea with his whole fleet when a terrific storm came on, which threatened the destruction of all the vessels. On the admiral's ship there happened to be a little child. The admiral took him in his arms, and looking up to heaven, exclaimed: "For the sake of this innocent child, O Lord God, have mercy on us!" The storm very soon abated. If almighty God will have compassion upon sinners for the sake of an innocent child, we may the more confidently believe that He will have mercy upon us when holy Mass is celebrated, for then we hold up toward heaven His only begotten Son.

Q. What is a sacrifice?

A. A sacrifice is the offering of an object by a priest to God alone, and the consuming of it to acknowledge that He is the Creator and Lord of all things.

The God Moloch

The idea of sacrifice was degraded by the heathen. The Phœnicians worshiped a detestable false god named Moloch. It was made of bronze, and had the head of an ox and the body of a man. The statue of this deity was hollow, and at the back there was an opening by means of which fire could be kindled inside, and the image rendered red hot. In the arms of this god, while in a state of incandescence, deluded parents were wont to lay their infants, who thus perished in excruciating agony. In order that the screams and cries of the innocent victims might not be heard by the parents and other bystanders,

the priests who offered the sacrifice used to blow trumpets and beat drums, while they danced round the statue of the god Moloch. To what an extent natural affections may be perverted!

Q. Is the Mass the same sacrifice as that of the cross?

A. The Mass is the same sacrifice as that of the cross.

The Fine for Hearing Mass

It is impossible to estimate the sacrifice of the Mass at a sufficiently high value. For a long time in England the penal laws were enforced against Catholics with extreme severity. Immense fines or long years of imprisonment were inflicted on those who ventured to assist at the celebration of Catholic worship. On one occasion a wealthy Catholic who was convicted of having been present at holy Mass, was condemned to pay £500. In order to pay this fine he collected a quantity of Portuguese gold pieces, fresh from the mint, on each of which was a cross. When he handed these over to the royal commissioner, the latter expressed his surprise that he should employ such bright, shining money in paying a fine. The recusant replied: "I should think it wrong not to give the brightest coins in return for the great privilege of worshiping my Lord and Saviour in the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Consider yourself, that the most intimate relation exists between the cross, which is stamped on each of these gold pieces, and the holy sacrament of the altar, for both are memorials of the infinite love of the Saviour."

Q. How is the Mass the same sacrifice as that of the cross?

A. The Mass is the same sacrifice as that of the cross, because the offering and the priest are the same — Christ our Blessed Lord; and the ends for which the sacrifice of the Mass is offered are the same as those of the sacrifice of the cross.

The Prophecy of Malachias

The Prophet Malachias (i. 11) foretold the nature and the universality of the sacrifice of the New Law. "From the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation; for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts." For every fifteen degrees of longitude westward, the day will be an hour behind us. Hence, with the aid of a map one can see where Masses are being offered when the hour of sacrifice is with us passed. Thus is the prophecy of Malachias being daily fulfilled in the repetition of that "clean oblation," — that is, the sacrifice of the cross; and its repetition is nothing more nor less than the offering of the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Q. What were the ends for which the sacrifice of the cross was offered?

A. The ends for which the sacrifice of the cross was offered were: 1st, To honor and glorify God; 2d, To thank Him for all the graces bestowed on the whole world; 3d, To satisfy God's justice for the sins of men; 4th, To obtain all graces and blessings.

King Ethelred at Mass

In the year 871, King Ethelred of England marched against the invading Danes with an army small in numbers, but fired with a holy zeal for the preservation of their altars and their homes. On the morning of battle, the king attended Mass and received holy communion. During Mass a message was sent him that the enemy was in sight, and that he should hurry to the front and take command of his forces. But Ethelred continued hearing Mass with the same fervor and recollection as before. Soon other messengers arrived, saying that the enemy was seizing on all the advantageous positions; but Ethelred replied that he would not leave the church until he had united himself to the Conqueror of conquerors and obtained His blessing. When he had communicated, and the Mass was ended, he arose, placed himself at the head of his forces, and in a few hours gained a most signal victory over the Danes. In wars of nations and in the battle of life, the issue depends more on God's favor than on man's endeavor.

Q. Is there any difference between the sacrifice of the cross and the sacrifice of the Mass?

A. Yes; the manner in which the sacrifice is offered is different. On the cross Christ really shed His blood and was really slain; in the Mass there is no real shedding of blood nor real death, because Christ can die no more; but the sacrifice of the Mass, through the separate consecration of the bread and the wine, represents His death on the cross.

The Lady who Disapproved of Ceremonies

Ceremonies are the rules of behavior in the performance of divine worship. In a mixed company, a lady entered into a religious discussion with an erudite Catholic. Among other subjects she conversed about the ceremonial of the Catholic Church, and expressed her opinion that ceremonies ought to be done away with, that religion would gain by the abrogation of externals. The savant, who had till then treated his interlocutor with great politeness, thereupon got up, tapped her familiarly on the shoulder, and said: "What strange ideas these geese have!" The lady colored with anger, and retorted: "Sir, you outrage the most ordinary rules of good manners. You seem ignorant of what the courtesies of society require!" The gentleman answered with a smile: "There now, one must be very polite toward you, and conform to the formalities of good society. But when we hold intercourse with God, you say such formalities are superfluous. Perhaps you will now think differently on this point." As there are certain rules of behavior to be observed in our intercourse with our fellowmen, so there is a ceremonial to be observed in the worship of God, and its code should be the more rigid in proportion as God's dignity is greater than man's.

Q. How should we assist at Mass?

A. We should assist at Mass with great interior recollection and piety and with every outward mark of respect and devotion.

A Prince Declines to have Honor Shown him in Church

A missionary in the East converted the eldest son of an Oriental monarch. The first time that the prince attended divine service, subsequently to his Baptism, the missionary had a chair placed for him apart, and handsomely decorated. But the prince declined the seat prepared for him, saying to the missionary: "Here in the house of God, Christ is present, the Sun of justice and sanctity. When the sun sheds his light, all minor luminaries vanish, of whatsoever magnitude they may be. Outside the church I am the crown prince; within the church I am but a poor sinner, like any one else." The prince was quite right, for the house of God is the house of prayer, and intended for the glory of God, not that of mortal man.

The Officer who Went to Hear Vianney Preach

The usefulness of sermons depends upon the enlightening grace of the Holy Spirit, imparted both to the preacher and to his hearers. The venerable pastor of the village of Ars, in France, led a very holy life, and was especially enlightened of God. His sermons were simple, but accompanied by such force and conviction that even bishops went to hear him. On one occasion an officer of high rank went to Ars to hear Vianney. He was accustomed to listen to the most celebrated orators in France; and on leaving the church he would not know how to say

enough in praise of the eloquence of the preacher. But when he came out of church after hearing the simple discourse of the *curé* of Ars, he was quite silent, and did not say a word in his praise. Surprised at this, his servant ventured to ask him how he had liked the sermon. The officer answered: "Hitherto I have always been pleased with the preacher; to-day I am displeased with myself." Hence we see that it is not human eloquence, but the grace of the Holy Spirit, that makes the preached word fruitful.

Q. Which is the best manner of hearing Mass?

A. The best manner of hearing Mass is to offer it to God with the priest for the same purpose for which it is said, to meditate on Christ's suffering and death, and to go to holy communion.

"Where the Flock is, there the Pastor must Be"

Mass must be heard in the church, not outside. It is related of St. John the Almoner, Patriarch of Alexandria, in the commencement of the seventh century, that having observed that several of his parishioners, instead of going to the church to hear Mass on Sundays and holy days, stood about in the churchyard and talked together, determined to put an end to this misbehavior on their part. He devised a capital method for doing this. One Sunday, instead of going into the church to say Mass, he went and stood outside with the idlers. They were surprised at seeing their bishop join them, and looked inquiringly at him. Then he said: "You

wonder to see me here, but it is nothing extraordinary. Where the flock is, there the pastor must be. If you go into the church, I shall go in also." These words produced the desired effect. The loiterers entered the church immediately, and from that day forth no one was seen standing outside while Mass was going on within the church.

LESSON TWENTY-FIFTH

ON EXTREME UNCTION AND HOLY ORDERS

Q. What is the Sacrament of Extreme Unction?

A. Extreme Unction is the sacrament which, through the anointing and prayer of the priest, gives health and strength to the soul, and sometimes to the body, when we are in danger of death from sickness.

A Priest Holds his Watch in his Hand

A saintly priest was called to the bedside of a sick man, who had led a dissolute life and was now at death's door. The priest had been asked to administer the sacraments to him, but the dying man would not hear of making his peace with God. In a mocking tone he said to the priest: "Is there really any hereafter?" The priest did not betray either horror or surprise; he calmly took out his watch, and looking at it, said: "By the time the hour hand gets down here [six o'clock], you will know whether there is an hereafter." He then rose as if to take his departure. But those few words caused the godless man to tremble; he called the priest back and begged him to hear his confession, which he made with every sign of deep and sincere contrition. Before night he was a corpse.

Q. When should we receive Extreme Unction?

A. We should receive Extreme Unction when we are in danger of death from sickness, or from a wound or accident.

A Medical Man Cures his Patient of his Erroneous Opinion Concerning Predestination

By our actions we decide our destiny. A man who was dangerously ill was counseled by those around him to receive the last sacraments. But the foolish fellow would not hear of this, saying they could be of no use to him, since whatever Providence had preordained for him, such would be his lot. However, he did not refuse to call in medical advice. Now the doctor, who was a good man, had heard that his patient would not receive the last sacraments. When he had examined the sick man, he said to him: "My dear sir, I can do nothing for you. Whatever God has predestined for you will happen, whether you take remedies or not." "That is not true," the patient replied; "you know very well that if you give me the right drug, I shall recover." "So you believe that medicine can be of assistance to you, after all? Well, then, there are spiritual remedies to restore the health of the soul; you will do well to make use of them." The sick man understood clearly what the doctor meant; he thanked him, saying he was a physician of the soul as well as of the body, and had cured him of a dangerous error.

Q. Should we wait until we are in extreme danger before we receive Extreme Unction?

A. We should not wait until we are in extreme danger before we receive Extreme Unction, but if possible we should receive it whilst we have the use of our senses.

A King who would not Hear Bad News

Rudolph, king of the Herulians, was at war with the Longobards. When the two armies met in a decisive battle, the king, confident of victory, remained in his tent, drinking and gambling. In order to keep himself informed of the course the battle was taking, he ordered one of the soldiers of his bodyguard to climb a high tree in the vicinity of the royal tent, whence he could watch both armies in the field. But when giving this command, the king added: "Yet beware how you report to me that my troops are taking to flight; if you do so, I will have your head cut off on the spot." The Herulians fought very bravely, but they were outnumbered and compelled to yield by the Longobards, who came up in overwhelming force. The soldier on the lookout saw that the enemy were victorious, and the Herulians taking to flight, yet he did not dare, remembering the king's threat, to inform him of their defeat. Presently the noise of the flying troops, and the bugle sounding a retreat, reached the king's ears. He came out of his tent and called to the soldier in the tree: "Are my Herulians in flight?" The soldier answered: "You say so, O King, and not I." Then the king returned into his tent, snatched up his sword, and rushed on to

the field to rally the fugitives and retrieve the day, but it was too late; the enemy had triumphed. Sinners who harden their hearts against all salutary warnings and will not hear of reforming their ways, resemble that king. They too, like him, will be overtaken by a disastrous fate.

Q. Which are the effects of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction?

A. The effects of Extreme Unction are: 1st, To comfort us in the pains of sickness and to strengthen us against temptation; 2d, To remit venial sins and to cleanse our soul from the remains of sin; 3d, To restore us to health, when God sees fit.

A Warrior's Anxiety to Receive Extreme Unction

Every Christian ought to form the purpose of receiving the last sacraments in case he should fall dangerously sick. The Christian should bear in mind that Extreme Unction was instituted by Christ for the purpose of restoring health to the sick, if God sees it to be expedient. Those who postpone being anointed until the last moment do not deserve to recover their health. We may with profit take example by the gray-haired veteran, Archduke Charles of Austria, who defeated Napoleon I in two decisive battles. One matter about which he displayed the utmost solicitude was, that if he was in danger of death by sickness he should receive the last sacraments betimes. Many and many a time he besought his confessor, if at any time he should be overtaken

by serious illness, to come to him and say: "Rise up, old soldier; it is time to fall into marching order!" and then to administer the sacraments to him, in order that He who directs battles and gives victory would grant him grace to conquer in his last conflict. But the veteran warrior needed no such exhortation, for in his last illness his first and chief desire was to receive the sacraments. He breathed his last in the end of April, 1847, in the time of year when some forty years previously he marshaled his forces for his most famous victory (Aspern).

Q. What do you mean by the remains of sin?

A. By the remains of sin, I mean the inclination to evil and the weakness of the will which are the result of our sins, and which remain after our sins have been forgiven.

The Want of Due Care

The sacramentals benefit those only who use them with reverence and respect. The following incident appeared in the public papers. A woman whose husband lay on his deathbed lighted a blessed candle (one which she had got on Candlemas Day) and placed it in the dying man's hand. Just at that moment there was a knock at the door, and she went to see who was there. She was some time absent, and when she returned, she found the bed in flames. She immediately got water to extinguish the fire, but it was too late; her husband was suffocated by the smoke, and had besides sustained severe burns. The woman was taken into custody and condemned to

several months' imprisonment with hard labor. — It is quite enough to place the lighted candle somewhere near the bed; besides, one should be very careful not to cause alarm to sick people.

Q. How should we receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction?

A. We should receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction in the state of grace, and with lively faith and resignation to the will of God.

The Man who Feigned Sickness

Those who mock at holy things often meet with condign punishment. In the time of the French Revolution priests were hunted down and put to death. One day the guests in a certain inn happened to express their surprise that the priest of the place had not been arrested, all attempts to apprehend him having failed. Then an idea suddenly struck the hostess. "I know what we will do," she said. "It is a very simple matter. First, we will send for two gendarmes and tell them to be on the watch. Then my husband shall go to bed and pretend to be ill. Meanwhile I will send some one into the village to spread the report that the landlord of the inn is at the point of death, and is desirous to receive the last sacraments. You bet, before long the priest will be here." This proposal was carried out, and as the woman surmised, the priest was soon on the spot. He asked where the sick man was, and on being conducted into the room where the police constables were concealed, he went straight up to the bed

whereon the man who feigned sickness was lying. He spoke to him, but he neither moved a muscle nor uttered a word. The priest then took his hand; it was cold as marble. Turning to the innkeeper's wife, he said in a reproachful tone: "Why did you not send for me sooner? I have come too late; the man is dead." The woman laughed, and the constables came forth from their hiding-place. But the man remained motionless. He was really dead,—dead by the visitation of God. The bystanders were struck with such terror that no one could speak a word; the priest took his departure unobserved and unmolested. True, indeed, are the words of Holy Scripture: God is not mocked.

Q. Who is the minister of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction?

A. The priest is the minister of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

Clement Hofbauer beside a Sick Bed

Those who are in attendance on the sick should not shrink from earnestly exhorting them to fulfill their Christian duty. On one occasion, Clement Hofbauer, the apostle of Vienna, was called to attend a dying man who had completely lost his faith, and for twenty-two years had not been to confession. Several priests had already visited him, but none of them had made any impression on him. His relatives, as a last resource, applied to Clement Hofbauer. The first thing he did was quietly to recite the rosary on behalf of the unhappy man. On entering the sick

room, he said: "Any one who is going on a long journey must provide himself with money for his journey; and you are going to enter upon the journey into eternity. Take the holy sacraments with you on your way, like a sensible man." But the sick man answered angrily: "Leave me in peace!" Hofbauer said no more at the time, but he remained in the sick room, and continued to recite the rosary. Again he tried to move the dying man to repentance, but all his efforts were in vain; he only ordered him out of the room. Hofbauer gravely replied: "No, I shall not go away, for I perceive that your end is fast approaching. I have often stood by the deathbed of persons who have died happily and holily. Now I shall for once witness the death of a reprobate, a lost soul." This speech alarmed the dying man. He begged the priest's pardon. "As far as I go," Hofbauer said, "all is forgiven; now make your peace with God." The sinner made his confession, and expired with every sign of sincere repentance.

Q. What is the Sacrament of Holy Orders?

A. Holy Orders is a sacrament by which bishops, priests, and other ministers of the Church are ordained and receive the power and grace to perform their sacred duties.

St. Martin and St. Ambrose

No earthly dignity can compare with that of Christ's priesthood. While the holy bishop, St. Martin, was one day dining with the Emperor Maximus, the latter, out of respect for his saintly

guest, passed him the royal goblet untasted; and the good bishop, to assert the dignity of his office, not only accepted the honor himself, but handed the cup to an humble priest, his secretary, as next in order of precedence. St. Ambrose, too, when the Emperor Theodosius would have seated himself in the sanctuary, exclaimed: "Emperor, go forth and take thy place among the laity, for though thine ermine makes thee an emperor, it does not make thee a priest."

Q. What is necessary to receive Holy Orders worthily?

A. To receive Holy Orders worthily it is necessary to be in the state of grace, to have the necessary knowledge and a divine call to this sacred office.

Prince Eugene of Savoy

God gives each one his vocation. It is recorded of the famous Austrian general, Prince Eugene of Savoy, who, though born and brought up in France, was a descendant of the Italian dukes of Savoy, that his father wished him to be a priest. Now to this Eugene, in spite of his piety, could not agree, for he felt that his vocation was that of a soldier. Military science, the art of war, was his favorite study. When he was nineteen years old, he begged the French king to give him the command of a regiment; but the king refused his request, with a sneer at his unsoldier-like appearance. Thereupon Eugene betook himself to Vienna and proffered the same petition to the Emperor Leopold I, who willingly gave him a command in his army. Eugene distinguished himself

so much by his cleverness and his courage that he speedily obtained promotion, and at last was made field-marshal. Then the French king regretted what he had done and endeavored to gain Eugene for his army, threatening to banish him from France for life, if he did not return immediately. But this threat was unheeded. Eugene remained in Austria, and the sequel proved that he was the man whom Divine Providence had chosen to defend that country, and, in fact, the whole of Christendom against the infidels. By his brilliant victory over the Turks at Zenta, in 1697, and by the conquest of Belgrade, he won for himself an immortal renown. — It is a sad mistake on the part of parents to force their children to enter upon a calling for which they have no predilection. Their vocation comes from God.

Pastor Kneipp's Water-cure

Father Kneipp, the apostle of cold water, is an instance of how a man is often interiorly urged to embrace some particular calling. This worthy man, who has attained a world-wide celebrity through his system of hydropathic treatment, and who died in 1897, was the pastor of a village in Swabia. His father was a weaver, and by his father's wish he learned the same handicraft. Yet he felt himself irresistibly impelled to devote himself to the service of God in the priesthood. Accordingly he applied to nearly twenty different priests, imploring them to assist him in the attainment of his desire. All his efforts were fruitless; no one would give him a helping hand. For three years he worked as a

journeyman weaver, putting by all the money he could possibly spare, with a view to studying for the priesthood. At the end of that time a fire broke out in the village; the conflagration spread to Kneipp's house, and the chest was destroyed in which he kept his hardly earned savings. Thereupon he left home and sought employment elsewhere, sustained by the hope of meeting with a charitable person who would provide him with the means of studying. Before long he found the friend he needed in the person of a priest who gave him regular instruction during two years, to prepare him for entering the seminary. Kneipp was twenty-three years old when he entered the training college at Dillingen on the Danube. But he had put too great a strain upon himself; in consequence of overwork his health gave way and he fell into a gradual decline. At this juncture, when his future seemed hopeless, he happened to come across a pamphlet on the "water-cure," giving directions how, by the use of cold water, invalids might regain their health. He determined to try this method, and took a cold bath daily in the river, following the prescribed rules. Before six months had elapsed his health began steadily to improve, and finally he attained the goal for which he had striven for fourteen years; in 1852 he was ordained priest. Kneipp was a great benefactor to the poor, and his reputation as an advocate of the water-cure is world-wide. Many sick people have derived benefit by the directions he published in a work which in the course of ten years reached fifty

editions of several thousands each. The work is entitled "My Water-cure."

Q. How should Christians look upon the priests of the Church?

A. Christians should look upon the priests of the Church as the messengers of God and the dispensers of His mysteries.

Alexander the Great in the Presence of the High Priest

Great respect ought to be shown to the ministers of the most high God. In the course of a victorious military expedition in the East, Alexander the Great penetrated as far as Jerusalem. The whole town was in an uproar on hearing of the mighty conqueror's approach, and every one offered prayers and sacrifices to obtain the divine protection. Finally, the Jewish high priest resolved to go, together with all the members of the priesthood, arrayed in their sacerdotal vestments, in solemn procession to meet the king and beg for mercy. The high priest wore the gold frontlet on which the name of Jehovah was inscribed, and the breastplate with the twelve precious stones. When Alexander beheld him, he fell, awestruck, upon his face before him. All the spectators of this scene were astonished. The commander-in-chief of Alexander's forces asked him why he had thus prostrated himself upon the ground. The king replied: "I did so, not to worship the priest, but God, whose minister he is." He then added that before he left Macedonia, that very man

appeared to him in a dream, wearing similar vestments, and had encouraged him to undertake the expedition, promising him the victory. That was the reason wherefore he was so deeply affected by the sight of the priest, and filled with reverential awe for the God he served. Alexander was then conducted into the temple, and shown the Sacred Scriptures, and the passage in the book of Daniel where the overthrow of the Persian kingdom is predicted. From that time forth he was always favorably disposed toward the Jews. Consequently they were well treated under the Macedonian rule. — This anecdote demonstrates how even a heathen monarch respected the ministers of God for the sake of their divine Master.

Q. Who can confer the Sacrament of Holy Orders?
A. Bishops can confer the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

A Sacrilegious Theatrical Performance

One year, on the Feast of the Ascension, Michael, the third emperor of Constantinople, caused a play to be performed in which the sacraments of the Church were turned into ridicule. One of the actors played his part as Archbishop of Constantinople, others represented different bishops; all on the stage wore sacerdotal vestments. The same night there was a terrible earthquake. The shocks of the earthquake continued all the following day, filling every one with terror. The emperor, however, did not take the warning to desist from encouraging his subjects in the mockery and profanation of holy things; shortly after he was assassinated by his own sons.

LESSON TWENTY-SIXTH

ON MATRIMONY

Q. What is the Sacrament of Matrimony?

A. The Sacrament of Matrimony is the sacrament which unites a Christian man and woman in lawful marriage.

Bishop Hilary's Advice to his Daughter

The unmarried state is more perfect than the married. St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers and one of the fathers of the Church, had been married in his youth, and was the father of one daughter. On the death of his wife he took Holy Orders. When on account of his zeal for the Christian faith he was banished to Asia, he left his daughter under the care of a Christian family. As soon as she was grown up, it was proposed to marry her to a Christian youth. This she told to her father, who wrote in reply: "I shall soon be returning home, and then I will show you the portrait of another suitor, the son of a king; he will come himself later on to ask you to celebrate your nuptials with him. You can then compare the two and take whichever of them you prefer." When the bishop came back he showed his daughter a crucifix, and counseled her to consecrate herself to Christ by a vow of life-long virginity. She followed his advice, and died a holy death very shortly after. When she was dying, her father said to her: "See,

your Bridegroom has come to conduct you to the eternal marriage-feast."

Q. Can a Christian man and woman be united in lawful marriage in any other way than by the Sacrament of Matrimony?

A. A Christian man and woman cannot be united in lawful marriage in any other way than by the Sacrament of Matrimony, because Christ raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament.

The Marriage Feast of Cana

It was on the occasion of a wedding in Cana of Galilee that Jesus raised the marriage contract to the dignity of a sacrament. In the beginning God had instituted marriage as a union of one man with one woman, for, having created Adam and Eve, He blessed them and said: "Increase and multiply and fill the earth" (Gen. i. 28), and that Adam understood their union to be one and indissoluble is evident from his words: "Wherefore, a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh" (Gen. ii. 24). But men soon rebelled against God's law, and carried their contempt for, and abuse of, marriage so far that "All flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth" (Gen. vi. 12), and in consequence God destroyed them with the deluge. Later on, even the chosen people introduced a plurality of wives and, in certain contingencies, divorce, which God, on account of their hard-heartedness and sensuality, was, as it were, obliged to permit. Among the heathen, meantime, marriage had been robbed of all its dignity, woman

had been degraded to a state worse than slavery, and the slightest whim or passion was sufficient cause for divorce. Then it was that Christ came and restored marriage to its original dignity, and, besides, so elevated the natural contract that it became a sacramental union. The Virgin Mother was there, and the virginal John, to show what pure motives ought to inspire the contracting parties. The apostles were there, indicating that the administration of marriage is an exclusive prerogative of Christ's ministers. Jesus changed water into wine to be served at the end of the feast, even as the richest graces attached to the marriage bond were reserved for the last, the Christian, era. He made marriage to be the symbol of the union between Himself and His Church, and hence to be held as sacred and sanctifying, one and indissoluble.

Q. Can the bond of Christian marriage be dissolved by any human power?

A. The bond of Christian marriage cannot be dissolved by any human power.

The Divorce of King Henry VIII

On the 6th of June, 1509, King Henry VIII of England was married by dispensation from Pope Julius II to Catherine of Aragon, widow of Henry's deceased brother Arthur. Henry was then a good Catholic, Defender of the Faith in reality, as well as in name. For eighteen years they lived happily, until Henry began to have scruples of conscience (?) concerning the validity of his marriage with his brother's widow.

The real cause of Henry's discontent was, first, that Catherine was childless as far as an heir to the throne was concerned, and second that he was madly in love with Catherine's maid of honor, Anne Boleyn. Henry applied to Pope Clement VII for an annulment of his marriage; and, though the loss to the faith of the whole British Empire stared him in the face, the Pontiff's answer was an unwavering "Non possumus" ("We cannot"). His words were an assertion of the Church's attitude on this matter before and since and always, for no human power can touch the Christian marriage bond. Thus is explained the apostasy of England and the existence of the English Establishment, for the Protestant hierarchy were willing to give Henry as many divorces as he would, in return for the privilege of confiscating the property of the outlawed English Catholics.

Q. Which are the effects of the Sacrament of Matrimony?

A. The effects of the Sacrament of Matrimony are; 1st, To sanctify the love of husband and wife; 2d, To give them grace to bear with each other's weaknesses; 3d, To enable them to bring up their children in the fear and love of God.

The "Ecce Homo" a Remedy for Domestic Discord

A wealthy couple, in spite of all their riches, lived in constant discord and daily disputes. The married state was anything but a happy state for them; the wife especially often shed bitter tears. One day she

happened to come across a manuscript book which was entitled: "Simple Remedies for the Household." It was in her grandmother's handwriting. As she idly turned over the leaves, to her surprise her eye fell upon the heading: "A household remedy against discontent." She read it eagerly; it ran thus: "Whenever you feel miserable or are out of temper, go to the picture of the 'Ecce Homo,' and place yourself at its feet. Contemplate it attentively for the space of three minutes, and recite three Our Fathers before you go away: this will restore peace and content to your mind. My confessor advised me to do this. I have tried the remedy for thirty years, and I have never found it to fail." The lady remembered that by a mere chance she had kept the picture in question, which had belonged to her grandmother; it was upstairs in the garret. She went up at once, dusted it carefully, and hung it on a nail in her room. Whenever she felt that a quarrel was impending, she tried the simple remedy her grandmother recommended. Through gazing at the countenance of Our Lord, so sorrowful and yet so gentle, she became so much more forbearing and complaisant that her husband remarked upon the change. She answered him with a smile: "I have found an excellent teacher." He wanted to know who that teacher was. So she told him everything quite frankly. Before long her husband also had recourse to this same remedy, when he foresaw that some household annoyance was in store for him. Thus in course of time peace and happiness prevailed in that family circle.

Q. To receive the Sacrament of Matrimony worthily is it necessary to be in the state of grace?

A. To receive the Sacrament of Matrimony worthily it is necessary to be in the state of grace, and it is necessary also to comply with the laws of the Church.

The Marriage of the Young Tobias

The young Tobias feared to marry his cousin Sara, knowing that she had had seven husbands killed by the demon on the first night of their marriage. The Angel Raphael assured him, saying: "The demon's power extends only over those who enter the married state banishing God from their hearts, and thinking only of satisfying their sensuality. You have nothing to fear, for you enter into this marriage with the proper dispositions." — Those who marry should always bear in mind these words of the angel.

Q. Who has the right to make laws concerning the Sacrament of marriage?

A. The Church alone has the right to make laws concerning the Sacrament of marriage, though the state also has the right to make laws concerning the civil effects of the marriage contract.

A Protestant Dispensation

In striking contrast with the Pope's action in the Henry VIII divorce case, is the attitude of the Protestant hierarchy, Luther, Melanchthon, etc., toward Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, and his desire to have two wives at the same time. Prince Philip had been

married for sixteen years to Christiana, daughter of George, duke of Saxony, and their union had been blessed with several children. Philip, however, became enamoured of Margaret Saal, a maid of honor in his household. Instead of applying for a divorce from his lawful wife, he requested the eight principal reformers of Wittenberg to permit him to marry Margaret, and have two wives at once. Thus runs their answer: "If your Highness is resolved to marry a second wife, we judge that it should be done privately. There should be no one present but the bride and a few witnesses, aware of the circumstances and bound to secrecy as though under the seal of confession. Thus all opposition and scandal will be avoided. Still, we ought not to be anxious about what the world will say, provided the conscience is at rest. Thus, we approve of it, and your Highness has, in this writing, our approbation." Such is the respect of Protestants for the marriage bond, and from the state of Protestant society to-day, one is reminded that the disciple is not above his master.

One of the very greatest evils in American society to-day is divorce. It outrages God's law, disintegrates the family, and degrades womanhood; and the Catholic Church alone protests.

Q. Does the Church forbid the marriage of Catholics with persons who have a different religion or no religion at all?

A. The Church does forbid the marriage of Catholics with persons who have a different religion or no religion at all.

A Heathen Usurer Lends to the God of the Christians

The reward of almsgiving does not always come at once. Sophronius, Bishop of Jerusalem, relates an interesting anecdote about a married couple. The wife was a Christian, the husband a heathen, and a usurer to boot. His wife advised him to lend money to the God of the Christians; by so doing he would get a higher interest. The man asked her where he could find the God of the Christians, whereupon she led him to the church, and showed him the needy mendicants standing around the door. "There," she said, "are Christ's representatives. Whatever you give to them counts as if it were lent to the God of the Christians." Trusting to her assertion, the man distributed fifty pieces of silver among the crowd. After three months had elapsed he said to his wife: "A quarter has now gone by; the debt is due. When will the God of the Christians pay me capital and interest?" She bade him have no fear, assuring him that he would quite certainly be paid. That same day the man went to the market and purchased a fish, which he brought home and gave to his wife to cook. When she cut it open, she found a sparkling jewel inside. Her husband took it to the jeweler, who gave him three hundred pieces of silver for it. This circumstance made so deep an impression on the usurer that he gave up his unjust gains and received Christian Baptism. The reward of almsgiving may be slow in coming, but it is certain to come at last.

Q. Why does the Church forbid the marriage of Catholics with persons who have a different religion or no religion at all?

A. The Church forbids the marriage of Catholics with persons who have a different religion or no religion at all, because such marriages generally lead to indifference, loss of faith, and to the neglect of the religious education of the children.

The True Catholic Marriage

A rich young lady was engaged to be married to a man who held an appointment under the government. The day before the wedding several friends and members of the family were invited to an evening party at the house of the bride. In the course of the conversation, which for the most part was general, the bridegroom-elect all at once began to speak with contempt of religion, and ridicule religious ceremonies and customs. His betrothed was shocked and surprised at this, and she gently begged him not to talk in such a manner. But he gave her plainly to understand that, as a man of enlightenment and free thought, he had done away with those mummeries. The young lady was at first dumfounded, but quickly recovering her self-possession, she said aloud: "A man who does not respect God or religion will assuredly not respect his wife. For this reason, I must decline to marry you." In vain her parents and others endeavored to persuade her to revoke her decision; she adhered to it, and thereby won the esteem of all who knew her.

Q. Why do many marriages prove unhappy?

A. Many marriages prove unhappy because they are entered into hastily and without worthy motives.

"Be a Better Wife"

Peace should prevail preëminently among the members of one household. A woman went to a saint and complained bitterly of her husband. The saint listened attentively to her without making any remark. Presently she asked him what he thought she had better do? The answer she received was this: "This is what I should advise you to do: Go home and be a better wife to your husband, then you will find he will be a better husband to you."

Q. How should Christians prepare for a holy and happy marriage?

A. Christians should prepare for a holy and happy marriage by receiving the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist; by begging God to grant them a pure intention and to direct their choice; and by seeking the advice of their parents and the blessing of their pastors.

The Result of a Lengthy Confession

It is enjoined on persons intending to marry to prepare themselves for their nuptials by approaching the Sacrament of Penance. Two young people about to be married went to a church in Paris for confession previous to their wedding. The bridegroom had soon finished; the bride, on the contrary, remained a whole half hour in the confessional. Her betrothed grew impatient while waiting for her; and

when she came out he said angrily that he did not want a girl for his wife who took half an hour to confess her sins. So the engagement was broken off. This incident got into the newspapers, and one of the richest merchants in Paris reading it, thought he would like to make the young lady's acquaintance. He obtained an introduction to her, and almost immediately offered himself as a suitor for her hand. The fact of her making so long a confession led him to think that a girl who prepared herself so conscientiously, and took so serious a view of an important step in life, would certainly prove an excellent and trustworthy wife. Thus it came to pass that the merchant proposed and was accepted by her in marriage. On their wedding-day the bride received numerous congratulations from persons moving in the best society in Paris. Her conscientiousness in approaching the Sacrament of Penance was the means of winning for her universal esteem and an affectionate and wealthy husband.

The Gambooges

The unhappiness of the domestic circle is very often the result of the parties having married contrary to the laws of the Church or in opposition to their parents' wishes; and not rarely it follows from an uncontrolled temper and tongue. A great English novelist has an amusing story of a Frenchman, named Gambooge, I think, who, regardless of his Church's laws and her parents' opposition, ran away with his bride. Before long he found her to be a perfect virago, and in despair he took to drink.

She soon followed suit and surpassed him in intemperance. Reduced to the most wretched destitution, he one day said musingly: "I would give my soul for a good dinner," and immediately the devil appeared and said: "Done." After some parley, they agreed that Satan for three years should execute Gambooge's every wish, and then should come into possession of his soul. Riches and social distinction soon were theirs, but not happiness, for the woman's tongue was as bad as ever. When but six months remained, the devil appeared often and gloated gleefully over his coming reward. In terror, Gambooge at last cried: "I am still your master for six months, therefore I command you to take my wife and live with her for that time." With a dreadful howl the devil flew up the chimney and never appeared more.

LESSON TWENTY-SEVENTH

ON THE SACRAMENTALS

Q. What is a sacramental?

A. A sacramental is anything set apart or blessed by the Church to excite good thoughts and to increase devotion, and through these movements of the heart to remit venial sin.

Maria Theresa's Consideration for the Aged

We ought to respect the old, and an example of this respect is one of the most beautiful sacramentals. It is well known that Catholic sovereigns are accustomed, in imitation of Our Lord's example, to wash the feet of twelve poor old men on Holy Thursday. By this they set an example of Christian humility and show their respect for old age. The Empress Maria Theresa used to wash the feet of twelve old women every year. On one occasion among the aged women chosen for this ceremony was one old crone of one hundred and eight years. But when the day came, she had not strength to bear the fatigue of the washing of feet, and was forced, to her deep regret, to remain at home. She was inconsolable at the thought of not seeing her beloved empress. When Maria Theresa heard how grieved the poor

old woman was, she went to see her that very day to console her. On entering her humble abode, the empress said: "I am told, my good old friend, that you are disappointed at not seeing me to-day, so I have come to see you." Before leaving, she gave her a substantial present; the old woman was so affected by the royal lady's kindness, that she could not utter a word; but ever after she did not let a day pass without praying that God would bless the good empress and give her health and length of days.

Q. What is the difference between the sacraments and the sacramentals?

A. The difference between the sacraments and the sacramentals is: 1st, The sacraments were instituted by Jesus Christ and the sacramentals were instituted by the Church; 2d, The sacraments give grace of themselves when we place no obstacle in the way; the sacramentals excite in us pious dispositions, by means of which we may obtain grace.

A Mother and her Children Burned to Death

An instance of carelessness in the use of blessed candles occurred recently near Wörishofen, in Bavaria. One night a terrific storm burst over the village, causing great terror and apprehension to all the inhabitants. One of the villagers, the mother of six children, all under eight years of age, foolishly aroused them from their sleep, and lighting a blessed candle,

placed it on the table and made the children kneel around while she recited some prayers. Apparently the woman fell asleep and thus was not aware that the candle burned down, for at four o'clock in the morning the house was seen to be on fire. The neighbors hastened thither and forced open the doors; they found the mother and all her children lying dead; they had been suffocated by the smoke and were terribly burned. How foolish it is to use consecrated things to one's own destruction for want of ordinary care!

Q. What is the chief sacramental used in the Church?

A. The chief sacramental used in the Church is the sign of the cross.

The Emperor Constantine's Vision

The sign of the cross conveys a blessing. Constantine the Great marched with his army in the year 312 against his enemy Maxentius. Before the battle outside the walls of Rome, both he and all his troops saw a shining cross in the heavens with these words: "In this sign thou shalt conquer." Immediately Constantine had a cross placed on the standards of his army, and he gained the victory over the opposing host. To this incident the origin of our ecclesiastical banners may perhaps be ascribed. We should often defeat our spiritual foes if in moments of temptation we made the sign of the cross.

Q. How do we make the sign of the cross?

A. We make the sign of the cross by putting the right hand to the forehead, then on the breast, and then to the left and right shoulders, saying: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Apostolic Origin of the Sign of the Cross

Nicephorus writes that St. John the Evangelist made upon himself the sign of the cross, before dying. Hilduin says St. Paul used this same sign to restore sight to a blind man. Many even affirm that Our Lord Himself taught this sign to the apostles, and that He used it to bless them on the day of His Ascension. "The sign of the cross," says St. Ignatius, disciple of St. John, "is the trophy raised against the power of the prince of this world; when he sees it, he is afraid; when he even hears of it, he is filled with terror."

Q. Why do we make the sign of the cross?

A. We make the sign of the cross to show that we are Christians and to profess our belief in the chief mysteries of our religion.

The Emperor's Stag

In a certain forest there was a stag to whose neck a tablet was attached, bearing these words in letters of gold: "Beware of touching me; I belong to the emperor." No sportsman ever dared to shoot that stag. When the Christian makes the sign of the cross, it is equivalent to bearing the inscription:

"Touch me not, I belong to Christ." Then the evil enemy does not venture to do him harm.

Q. How is the sign of the cross a profession of faith in the chief mysteries of our religion?

A. The sign of the cross is a profession of faith in the chief mysteries of our religion because it expresses the mysteries of the Unity and Trinity of God and of the Incarnation and death of Our Lord.

The Dying Officer and the Crucifix

A few years ago there lived an officer in one of our large towns who, though brought up as a Catholic, was a sworn enemy to religion and never said a prayer. He had a servant who, unlike his master, had not belied his early training, but every day said his prayers devoutly before a crucifix which he had hung upon the wall of the little room where he slept. When the officer saw the crucifix he ordered it to be instantly taken down. Not long after he became dangerously ill, and grew rapidly worse, so that the doctor declared that his case was hopeless, and in fact he had but a few hours to live. Then his pious servant resolved to make an earnest attempt to save his master's soul. Going close up to him, he said: "Sir, there is some one waiting outside, no other than your best friend: he is most desirous to come in and be reconciled to you. May I admit him?" The sick man was much surprised; he wondered who it could be who wanted to see him, and told his man to show the stranger in. Then the servant hastened to fetch his crucifix which used to hang

on the wall, and bringing it to his master, he held it up before him, saying: "O dear sir, here is your best friend, one who your whole life long has shown you so much kindness and bestowed so many benefits upon you, and whom you nevertheless have hitherto only repulsed and persecuted. He is infinitely merciful; He longs to be reconciled to you before your death. Do not turn Him away this time." And now behold a miracle of grace; the dying man took the crucifix in his hand, kissed it with tears in his eyes, and told his servant to go at once and bring a priest. The priest came without delay, the officer made a humble and contrite confession of the sins of his past life and expired in the best dispositions. How well it is when impenitent sinners upon their deathbed are openly exhorted by their friends or attendants to repent and be converted! Those who refrain from speaking through false delicacy, or a fear of giving offense, are no true friends to the sick person.

Q. How does the sign of the cross express the mystery of the Unity and Trinity of God?

A. The words, "In the name," express the Unity of God; the words that follow, "of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," express the mystery of the Trinity.

The Password

General Smith, of the army of the South, was coming in with his men too late to learn the password. Knowing that if he went forward he would receive the fire of his own side, he asked his men if any one

would give his life to save the rest. A soldier stood out of the ranks; after explaining the certain danger he would have to face, the general gave him a slip of paper on which was written: "Send me the password. — General Smith." He knew the soldier would be shot and then searched, and thus the paper would be found and the sign made known. The soldier sets out, and reaches the outposts. "Who goes there?" "A friend." "Give the password." But the soldier advances in silence, and at once the rifles are aimed at him. He thereupon made the sign of the cross, and to his surprise, the rifles are lowered. The act of a Catholic soldier in commending himself to God was the very sign given that morning by the commander to his army.

Q. How does the sign of the cross express the mystery of the Incarnation and death of Our Lord?

A. The sign of the cross expresses the mystery of the Incarnation by reminding us that the Son of God, having become man, suffered death on the cross.

The Crucifix in the Hand of the Dying

When we do satisfaction for our sins, we, by the sign of the cross, unite our atonement to the satisfaction made by Christ. A girl who had been too fond of dancing and too eager in her pursuit of worldly amusements in general, was dying of consumption. When the doctor told her that she had but a short time more to live, she sent to the priest, begging him to bring her the last sacraments. After she had made her peace with God, she held out her

open hands to the priest, saying with tears: "My hands are empty, oh, how empty!" By this she meant to signify that she had done but few good works, so that her hands contained no merits. Then the priest took a crucifix and placed it in her hands, saying: "The merits of Christ will supply all that is wanting in your works." Thereupon the dying girl took heart again; she placed all her confidence in Our Lord's merits, and expired with an expression of peace and joy upon her countenance. It is a laudable custom to put a crucifix into the hands of the dying, and to lay one on the breast of the dead when they are prepared for burial.

Q. What other sacramental is in very frequent use?

A. Another sacramental in very frequent use is holy water.

The Use of Holy Water an Ancient Custom

The use of holy water dates from about the year of the world 2514. In the book of Numbers, eighth chapter, we read that "the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Take the Levites out of the midst of the children of Israel, and thou shalt purify them according to this rite: let them be sprinkled with the water of purification."

Q. What is holy water?

A. Holy water is water blessed by the priest with solemn prayer to beg God's blessing on those who use it, and protection from the powers of darkness.

Holy Water and the Grasshoppers

The efficacy of holy water in protecting us and driving the demons away, is well illustrated in the following anecdote. St. Aphraates, a solitary in the desert near Antioch, was appealed to by a farmer to help him ward off the annual onslaught of the grasshoppers on his crops. The saint, bidding the man trust in God, directed that a pitcher of water be brought, and into it he put some salt and prayed over it and blessed it. He then directed the farmer to take the pitcher and sprinkle the water around the boundaries of his estate. Presently the grasshoppers arrived, darkened the air, and covered the country; but not a single one succeeded in crossing the limits of our laborer's fields, and such as made the attempt were thrown back as if by an invisible agency.

Q. Are there other sacramentals besides the sign of the cross and holy water?

A. Besides the sign of the cross and holy water, there are many other sacramentals, such as blessed candles, ashes, palms, crucifixes, images of the Blessed Virgin and of the saints, rosaries, and scapulars.

St. Blase Cures a Boy

The sacramentals often deliver from bodily ills. St. Blase was the Bishop of Sebaste, in Asia Minor, in the commencement of the fourth century. He was a physician before he became a priest. One day a woman came to him bringing with her a boy in whose throat a fish-bone had stuck, causing it to

swell so as to endanger his life. On her knees she entreated the bishop to do something for the child. St. Blase called for two tapers, which he lighted and held crosswise under the boy's chin ; he then recited some prayers and gave him his blessing. Almost immediately the fish-bone loosened and was easily removed ; the boy experienced no ill effects from the accident. In commemoration of this incident it is customary in many churches for priests on the 3d of February, the day after the Purification, to give the blessing of St. Blase to the people, at the same time praying that it may please God to deliver all present from diseases of the throat.

The Conversion of Alphonsus Ratisbonne

The use of consecrated objects is often a means of grace. The wonderful conversion of Alphonsus Ratisbonne in the year 1842, in Rome, affords proof of the profit to be derived from the sacramentals. He was an Alsatian Jew; his calling was that of a commercial traveler. When he was twenty-eight years old he had to go to Rome on business ; while there he went to see a friend whom he had known from boyhood, who had entered upon a literary career, and become a Catholic. This friend gave him a medal of Our Lady as a keepsake. Ratisbonne laughed at it ; however he kept the medal, and what was more, he wore it continually on his person. During his stay in Rome he went about to see all the principal objects of interest in the city, and visited, among other churches, that of St. Andrea. Whilst there he was suddenly surrounded by a bril-

liant light, and beheld before him a figure resplendent with glory, resembling the image of Our Lady upon the medal which had been given him; she smiled kindly upon him and beckoned him to approach her. Ratisbonne, overwhelmed with awe and astonishment, fell upon his knees; tears rolled down his cheeks. For a long time he knelt there, absorbed in prayer, after the apparition had vanished; he resolved not to leave Rome till he had received Baptism. He was in fact baptized in Rome and became a zealous missionary. This wonderful conversion of a Jew reminds one of that of Saul, the persecutor of the early Christians.

LESSON TWENTY-EIGHTH

ON PRAYER

Q. Is there any other means of obtaining God's grace than the sacraments?

A. There is another means of obtaining God's grace, and it is prayer.

The Emperor Maximilian in Danger

He who has recourse to prayer in the time of need may confidently expect the divine assistance. In the year of Our Lord 1496, the Emperor Maximilian of Hapsburg was hunting chamois on the mountains near Innsbruck. He climbed one eminence after another. At last he descried a herd of chamois. The timid animals caught sight of him and took flight. The emperor pursued them fearlessly and eagerly ; suddenly the ground at the edge of a precipice gave way under his feet and amid a shower of stones he fell from a considerable height on to a narrow ledge of rock on the side of the steep declivity known as St. Martin's well. He was unable to go onward or backward ; had his fall not been broken, he would have been precipitated into the river Inn, which flowed in the valley below. The emperor blew his horn loudly, but the sound did not reach the valley. However, though the blast was not heard, the criti-

cal position of the emperor was perceived by his attendants, who saw him on the ledge of rock, but could afford him no assistance. Returning to the plain, they spread the news of the accident, and the brave Tyrolese hastened to the succor of their ruler. But alas! it was impossible to reach him, all human help was in vain. The emperor remained two nights and two days suspended, as it were, on the face of the declivity; he gave himself up for lost, and prepared himself for death. A priest carried the Blessed Sacrament to the foot of the rock and gave him the last absolution and benediction, while the people, kneeling around, prayed earnestly for the rescue of their beloved sovereign. Maximilian himself knelt on his narrow resting-place, and sent up fervent prayers to Heaven. Almost immediately he heard sounds close beside him, and a huntsman suddenly appeared, who had constructed a kind of path with ladders and ropes down the surface of the rock. Taking the emperor on his shoulders he bore him in safety to the valley below. The emperor was received with acclamations of delight by the assembled multitude; when he turned to thank his rescuer, the man had vanished. It was universally believed that almighty God had sent an angel to save the emperor's life. A cross has since been erected to mark the spot where he knelt in prayer.

The Servant who Burned her Gloves

Thanksgiving is an important part of prayer, and an important duty in a Christian's life. His motto should be: "Return thanks for all, be the gift ever

so small." A lady in Berlin was accustomed to give her servants a handsome present every year on Christmas eve. One Christmas the gift both for the cook and the housemaid consisted only of a pair of warm winter gloves. As hitherto they had always had more than this, the housemaid was angry at receiving what seemed so little ; in a fit of temper she threw the gloves on to the fire and gave her mistress notice. The cook, who was older, more experienced, and wiser, thanked her mistress and tried on the gloves. She could not get her fingers into them, for in each of the fingers there was a piece of paper; she pulled out the papers, ten five-mark notes, in all 150 marks (thirty dollars). Seeing this the housemaid rushed to the stove, but it was too late; the flames had already consumed her gloves. Such are the consequences of ingratitude!

Q. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is the lifting up of our minds and hearts to God to adore Him, to thank Him for His benefits, to ask His forgiveness, and to beg of Him all the graces we need whether for soul or body.

God Defends the Right

We should call upon God when in sore need of help. In the year 1278, after Rudolph of Hapsburg had been raised to the throne of Germany, Ottocar, the king of Bohemia, would not acknowledge his supremacy, and refused to surrender the territory of which he had taken possession. But when Rudolph pushed his victorious forces as far as Vienna, Ottocar

gave up the lands that appertained to the German Empire, only retaining Bohemia and Moravia. Somewhat later he regretted having done so, and marched his troops into Austria. The two armies met, and a pitched battle was fought near Ildenspengen. Although Rudolph's force was greatly inferior in numbers to that of the enemy, he did not fear defeat. Before engaging in the fight, he caused a hymn to our blessed Lady, invoking her aid, to be sung by the soldiers; for their battle-cry he gave them the name of "Jesus." The invader's war-cry was "Prague." Rudolph gained a complete victory; his opponent was slain in a hand-to-hand fight. Christian people might take example by this God-fearing monarch, who commenced every undertaking in the name of God, and continually placed all his confidence in the Most High.

Francis I after the Battle of Leipzig

During the battle of Leipzig, Francis I, emperor of Austria, stood with the allies on an eminence near the town. When tidings were brought to him that Napoleon was defeated, he fell on his knees, and raising his hands to heaven, gave humble and hearty thanks to God.

The Gratitude of Dogs

Pliny, a Roman writer, relates that he knew of a dog which, his master having been killed by robbers, would not leave the remains of his benefactor. Although himself severely wounded, he watched over the body, not allowing any wild beasts or birds

of prey to approach it. The same writer relates another incident which occurred in Rome. A Roman citizen, who had been condemned to death, was led away to prison. His dog followed him, and could not be driven away from the door of the prison. After the condemned man had been executed, his body was thrown into the Tiber. The dog, which had not swerved from his master's side, sprang into the river after the corpse and did his utmost to prevent it from sinking. Thus we see how brute beasts manifest gratitude toward those who have befriended them. Yet how many human beings neglect to give thanks to the Lord their God, for all the benefits He bestows on them.

Q. Is prayer necessary to salvation?

A. Prayer is necessary to salvation, and without it no one having the use of reason can be saved.

The Wall of Snow

At the time when the armies of Napoleon I overran Europe, the inhabitants of a lonely and secluded farmhouse, situated very near the town of Schleswig, were greatly alarmed on hearing that the enemy was approaching that town. They had seen the sky colored crimson by the reflection of numerous conflagrations on the path of the hostile troops, and they feared lest before entering the town the soldiers would make a raid on their farm, lay hands on all they could find, drive out the inmates and set fire to the house, as they had done in many other instances. All night through, while listening for the tramp of

the dreaded invaders, the family prayed earnestly to God for His protection. The old grandmother was most assiduous in her petitions; taking her prayer-book, she devoutly recited the prayers for the time of war, in which this supplication occurs: "Build Thou up a wall around us, that the enemy may not approach our habitation." When she had ended, the proprietor of the farm remarked that he thought that was asking too much of almighty God, but the old woman shook her head. Now it was midwinter, and the cold was excessively sharp. When the day dawned, the inmates of the house, on looking out, were astonished to find that the wind had driven the snow and piled it up to such a height by the side of the road, as actually to form a wall which effectually hid the farmhouse from view. The family were amazed at the extraordinary height of the snow-drift. Thus they had been defended from any molestation on the part of the soldiers, who during the hours of darkness had marched along the road past the house. Thus God often protects His servants by natural means without miraculous intervention, and thereby manifests His omnipotence.

Q. At what particular times should we pray?

A. We should pray particularly on Sundays and holy days, every morning and night, in all dangers, temptations, and afflictions.

Thirteen Days' Burial

About two hundred years ago, on occasion of an outbreak of Vesuvius, the little town of Ceretto

was converted by an earthquake into a heap of ruins. At the time the earthquake occurred, several children were playing in one of the streets. On feeling the shock, they ran home as fast as they could, but on their way a high wall fell and buried them. A boy fourteen years old had a most fortunate escape; he was completely covered by the fallen rubbish, but not crushed or in anywise injured. Thus imprisoned, he prayed continually to God for help. He was so tormented with thirst, that he was fain to lick the moisture off some damp stones. God in His mercy sent him relief, for He caused him to fall into a deep sleep, or rather a trance, from which he did not awake until thirteen days had elapsed. Those thirteen days did not seem as long to him as three. On awakening, the boy summoned all his remaining strength and shouted loudly, calling on his parents. Presently he heard a noise above his head. He shouted again, and this time more loudly. His voice was heard; a party of men set to work to remove the débris and soon dug out the boy, who was in a kind of cave beneath eight feet of ruins. The delight of the parents on recovering their son was indescribable. Under medical care he got quite well in three days' time. — Well it is for us to remember the divine promise: "Because he hath hoped in Me, I will deliver him; I will protect him because he hath known My name. He shall cry to Me, and I will hear him; I am with him in tribulation, and I will deliver him." — Psalm xc. 14, 15. The earthquake in question took place on the 5th of July, 1698, at about five o'clock in the afternoon.

The Good Effect of the Rosary

Calumniators ought to be silenced. A monk who was on a journey found himself alone in the railway coach. He wore his habit, and a rosary hung from his girdle. Presently a woman got in who had her beads in her hand and gave herself out for very pious. She soon began to abuse one of her neighbors roundly. "Well, my good woman," the monk said, "suppose we say a chapter for your neighbor." He began to say his beads, and the woman said them with him. This took about a quarter of an hour, but as soon as they had done, the woman began again. This time it was her neighbor's wife whom she abused; she could put up with the man, she said, but the woman was unbearable. The monk stopped her at once, saying they could not do better than say their beads for her neighbor's wife. This was done accordingly; but the tongue of the detractor was not yet stopped. She began again: "The man's mother-in-law is worst of all, no one can tolerate her." Once more the monk cut her short: "Very well," he said, "we will say our beads for the mother-in-law, also." While this was being done, the terminus was reached, and the monk took leave of his garrulous companion, saying: "I shall be pleased to meet you again. We have said a good many prayers together." But she answered: "I shall take care never to travel again with your Reverence." The plan the monk pursued is not the only means of silencing evil tongues.

"Repeat the Alphabet"

We ought neither to speak nor to act when we are angry; the better plan is to pray. Athenagoras, the sage, once gave the following advice to the Emperor Augustus, who was of a very irascible temperament: "When you feel a sudden ebullition of anger, repeat the twenty-four letters of the Greek alphabet." To the ears of a Christian it might sound childish to be told to repeat the letters of the alphabet; some form of prayer would be recommended to him, which he must recite devoutly. This would prove a far better means of allaying wrath than that proposed by the sage of yore.

A Soldier not to be Deterred from Prayer by Ridicule

We ought to say our prayers every morning and night. A young man, the son of pious parents who had taught him to kneel down every morning and night and say his prayers, enlisted in the army. The first night in the barracks he knelt down by his bedside as he was accustomed to do, and silently recited his night prayers. The other soldiers, his seniors both in age and in the service, had never witnessed such a proceeding; they openly ridiculed him for it. As he took no notice of this, they began to roar with laughter, to whistle and stamp their feet. However he did not allow himself to be put out, he calmly finished his devotions and then lay down in bed. The second evening he knelt down as before. This was the signal for a similar outburst of noise as on

the preceding night. On the third evening the same took place, but the young man was not disconcerted and paid no heed to what was said or done. At last one of the noisiest of the men said: "Let the lad alone, comrades; there is the making of a good soldier in him; he can stand fire." From that time forth no one disturbed him at his prayers; nay more, several of the others followed his example, or if they did not kneel down, at least they breathed a silent prayer before composing themselves to sleep. The courageous young soldier quickly rose to distinction in the army.

The Beggar-man at the Royal Table

We ought to give thanks to God before and after meals. A pious king (Alfonso of Aragon) was careful always to say grace before and after his meals. Hearing that his courtiers never gave thanks on commencing or ending their repasts, he resolved to give them a practical lesson in this respect, and invited them all to dinner. While they were at table, a beggar-man entered the hall, as was preconcerted, and seated himself at the royal table without making an obeisance or saying a prayer. He helped himself from the dishes before him, and, having satisfied his appetite, went away, as he had been ordered to do, without a word of gratitude to the king. The courtiers were highly incensed, and wondered that their royal host made no remark as to the man's conduct; but when they ventured to express their indignation and abuse the vulgar intruder, the king rose up and checked them, saying: "Do

not be wroth with that beggar-man. Is not this exactly how you act toward your heavenly King? You seat yourselves at table without asking a blessing and depart without returning thanks. Has not God as much reason to be angry with you, as you have with that ignorant mendicant?" The courtiers admitted the justice of the remark and thenceforth never omitted to say grace before and after meals.

"Pigs do not Pray"

A Tyrolese who had been out hunting all day went into a hostelry and ordered dinner. When the meal was set before him, he did not begin to eat until he had crossed himself and asked a blessing. A party of travelers were seated at a table close by; one of them called to the newcomer in a contemptuous manner: "Hello, you there, is it the fashion for all to pray before dinner where you come from?" The Tyrolese replied: "Not all; the pigs do not." By this he meant to say that those who do not say grace before meals are like brute beasts who have no reason and do not thank the giver for their food.

Courage to Confront Derision

At the *table-d'hôte* of a grand hotel in a large town forty guests were seated one evening. Various ranks and conditions of men were represented there. Just as the soup was served, they were joined by a young man whose appearance and manners bore the stamp of good-breeding and superior rank. On taking his place at the table he made the sign of the cross and

silently said grace. Several gentlemen present laughed aloud; others exchanged glances and smiled. The stranger was not disconcerted; on the contrary, he asked why they were laughing at him,—was there anything ludicrous about him? A gentleman sitting by said: "One cannot help laughing at your antics." "Oh," he replied, "you think it ridiculous to say grace? Now look here; no very wonderful courage is required to make fun of a stranger, if you have forty people to back you up; but to do what duty and conscience enjoin and thereby encounter the scorn and derision of the whole company at a well-filled table is what only a brave man can do." This speech silenced all at table; for a few minutes not a word was spoken. The stranger was the first to enter into conversation; this he did with his neighbor. He laid himself out to be agreeable, and every one was pleased with him. When on rising from table he crossed himself and returned thanks, not so much as a smile was visible on any countenance. On withdrawing he bowed courteously to all the company, and his salutation was cordially returned.

The Hailstorm at Dinner-time

A farmer and his family were seated at dinner one day when a storm suddenly came up, and a violent shower of hailstones fell, which broke some of the windows and covered the ground with pieces of ice. It was just about harvest-time, and the father of the family began to lament bitterly, saying the hailstorm would entirely ruin his crops. One of the children listened attentively to what her father said; then she

gravely remarked: "Perhaps almighty God is angry with us, because we do not ask a blessing before dinner." — The little girl was not far wrong, for it is true that after a time God withdraws His favor and His benefits from those who prove ungrateful. From that day forward the farmer's family never sat down to table without saying grace.

Q. How should we pray?
A. We should pray: —
1st. With attention.

The Praying Machines

Those who have traveled in India must have observed the so-called praying mills. They consist of a cylindrical apparatus, around which are rolled papers inscribed with formulas of prayer, or rather charms. These cylinders are sometimes turned by hand, at other times they are fixed in the bed of a running stream, or on an eminence; so as to be made to revolve by the action of water or wind. The natives believe that turning these formulas of prayer has the same value as uttering them with the lips. Every sensible man must smile at such folly. Unhappily, praying machines are not unknown among Christians. He who recites prayers with his lips only, while his thoughts are far away, somewhat resembles the praying machines of the heathen.

2d. With a sense of our own helplessness and dependence upon God.

The Servant who Relied on her Own Powers

Those who forget God in their work seldom prosper in it. Many people are apt to trust to their own cleverness and the skill they imagine they possess, as the giant Goliath trusted in his great strength. Yet they not unfrequently are put to shame as he was; God permits this for their humiliation. The following anecdote is an instance of this. A pious woman got a situation for her daughter as housemaid in a respectable family. When she bade her good-bye, the mother said: "Be sure to ask God every day to help you and prosper you in your work." "I am not afraid," the girl answered. "I can trust to my own skill." The first morning she was in service she had to get up early and light the fires; she could not make them burn. On her mistress coming down she reproved her, but the girl excused herself by saying that the wood was damp. Presently she had to carry her master's breakfast across the street to his office; she slipped, and broke everything she was carrying. When she went back to the house, her mistress scolded her thoroughly; but she excused herself, saying that there was ice on the stones that made them slippery. Soon after she was sent down to the cellar to fetch a basket of eggs; as she took up the basket a mouse jumped out and startled her so that she let the basket fall and broke several eggs. On her mistress hearing what had happened — she was already annoyed with the girl — she reproved her very sharply. The next thing she had to do was to

take a jug of milk back to the dairy, as it was not fresh enough for use. Just as she reached the dairy a large icicle fell from the roof and struck the jug in her hand, so that half the milk was spilt. She returned to her mistress and told her this ; but before the story was ended, the lady said that was enough, she could not keep such a clumsy, awkward girl in her service, and dismissed her forthwith. Thus the very next day the girl returned home quite shamefaced. She told all to her mother, who rejoined: "There now, you see how necessary, how indispensable it is, to seek God's blessing on all we have to do." — The thousand circumstances of daily life are beyond our control ; but God can dispose all things so as to render them not only harmless but even advantageous to us.

"God's blessing we need,
If we wish to succeed."

3d. With a great desire for the graces we beg of God.

The Glow-worm and the Pocketbook

A poor widow was called upon to pay a debt which amounted to a large sum, although she was certain that her husband had discharged that debt before his death. Long and carefully she searched for the diary in which her husband was accustomed to enter all his payments, and to keep the receipts of his bills, but her search was fruitless, and the day approached when she was summoned to appear before the magistrate. On the evening preceding that day — it was in the month of July — she and her children were praying earnestly to God, beseeching him to help

her in this extremity, when a glow-worm entered through the open window, and flew behind a large cupboard which stood in the room. The youngest child was set upon seeing the glow-worm, and he worried his mother so much that, to content him, she moved the cupboard a little way out from the wall, and lo ! there lay the long-sought pocketbook. God makes use of the humblest and weakest creatures to promote His glory.

The Rescue of a Toll-collector's Family

Once upon a time the river Adige, which rises in the Alps and flows through Verona, swelled in the spring to such an extent that it overflowed its banks and inundated the country round. Even the stone bridge at Verona was swept away by the force of the current; only the two middle arches, on which the toll-taker's house stood, remained erect. Yet the ice floes struck these massive piles with such violence that it was feared every moment that they would give way. The unfortunate individuals in the toll-house wrung their hands in despair, calling upon God and man to help them. But the surging waves hurried along so fast that no one ventured to put out in a boat to their rescue. Then Count Spolverini rode up and encouraged the people to make the attempt, promising a reward of 200 *louis d'or* to any one who should succeed in rescuing the terror-stricken family. Yet so great was the danger that no one responded to his appeal. Then a countryman in his working clothes came forward, — a tall, powerful man, — who, when he heard what the count said, leaped into the nearest fishing-boat,

and with a few vigorous strokes rowed up to the two supports yet standing. It was a task of great difficulty, and the boat proved too small to bring away all the family at once; in fact, he had to row out three times before all were brought to shore in safety. A few minutes later the last supports were carried away. The count handed the promised reward to the brave rescuer; but he declined to accept it, saying: "Give the money, if you please, sir, to the toll-collector and his family, who have lost everything they possessed." He then disappeared among the crowd of bystanders. The poet Bürger took this incident as the motive of his well-known poem, *Das Lied vom braven Manne*. The bridge was rebuilt at Verona, and stands there to this day.

4th. With trust in God's goodness.

The Emperor Ferdinand II in a Time of Distress

He who trusts in God builds on a sure foundation. About the time of the commencement of the Thirty Years' War (1619), Ferdinand II, afterward emperor of Germany, was hard pressed by the insurgents in Vienna. When in sore straits he cast himself on his knees before a crucifix (that which is now over the tabernacle in the parish church of the Hofburg in Vienna), and implored the help of God. Nevertheless, the insurgents made their way into the Hofburg, and endeavored to force him to make concessions to the Protestants. This Ferdinand, relying on the divine assistance, steadily re-

fused to do. All at once the shrill blast of a trumpet was heard; five hundred dragoons under the command of St. Hilaire had arrived before the Hofburg. The rebels, startled and terrified, fled hastily out of the castle. Scripture truly says that God is the salvation of those who put their hope in Him.

5th. With perseverance.

Clement Hofbauer's Trust in God

It is related of Clement Hofbauer, the apostle of Vienna, that at one time he had prayed long and earnestly about an important subject without having received an answer to his supplications. Yet he did not give up hope; he continued to pray with redoubled fervor. At length with holy familiarity he said to God: "Lord Jesus, we shall see who gives way first, Thou or I. I will not cease until Thou hearest me." These words display steadfast confidence in God.

St. Monica's Persevering Prayer

We ought not to be discouraged if our prayers are not immediately granted. For many long years St. Monica prayed for her son's conversion, yet despite her tears and supplications he only fell deeper into sin. One day she went to a bishop and told him her grief. The bishop bade her not be disheartened, since it was impossible that the child of so many tears and prayers should be lost. His words came true; Augustine was converted and be-

came a great saint. For eighteen years his mother ceased not to pray for him.

Q. Which are the prayers most recommended to us?

A. The prayers most recommended are the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Apostles' Creed, the Confiteor, and the Acts of Faith, Hope, Love, and Contrition.

The Monk who Censured Martha's Activity

A monk was once sent to another monastery, where all the inmates had to perform manual labor. The newcomer presumed to censure this rule; he told the monks they attached too much importance to the meat that perisheth. "Remember," he said, "how Our Lord commended Mary and blamed the busy Martha." Hearing this, the abbot had that monk shown into a cell and given a book of spiritual reading. When noon came, he expected that some one would come and call him to dinner. He waited in vain, the hours passed slowly by, no one summoned him to table. Toward evening he left his cell, and asked the first monk he met whether the community had no dinner that day. "Oh, yes," was the reply, "we all dined at noon just as usual." "How was it then that I was not called to dinner?" he inquired. The abbot coming up at that moment answered him. "It was because you chose for yourself the better part, as Mary did, and seemed to consider it quite superfluous to be solicitous concerning your daily bread. Now we, on the contrary, work hard and require strength for our work, so we cannot dispense with eating." The stranger felt the

rebuke; when he took his departure, the abbot said to him: "Had there been no Martha to do the work, Mary would not have been able to sit at Our Lord's feet." Christ did not blame Martha for working, but for excessive solicitude and anxiety.

The Soldier's Prayer

Extemporaneous prayer (prayer in one's own words) is pleasing to God. A bishop who was visiting the sick soldiers in a military hospital, exhorted one of the patients not to forget his morning and night prayers. The soldier replied: "My lord, I do say my prayers the first thing in the morning and the last at night, but only short ones in military fashion." On the bishop inquiring what were his daily orisons, the man rejoined: "When I wake in the morning, I say: 'My God, Thy servant is about to get up; have mercy on him.' And at night when I lay down to rest, I say: 'My God, Thy servant is going to sleep; have mercy upon him.'" The prelate was touched by this account of the soldier's devotions, and on leaving he shook hands with him in the kindest manner. Undoubtedly God was well pleased with this man's simple and sincere prayer. We read in the Gospel that the good thief on the cross, and the publican in the temple prayed in the same manner and they found grace with God. Our Lord also prayed in the Garden of Olives in His own words.

Q. Are prayers said with distractions of any avail?

A. Prayers said with wilful distractions are of no avail.

Archimedes' Death

We ought to pray with devotion. Archimedes, one of the greatest mathematicians of antiquity, was in Syracuse when it was taken by storm, 212 B.C. During the period of the attack he was so profoundly absorbed in working out a mathematical problem, that he heard neither the clash of arms, the shouts of the soldiers, nor the groans of the wounded. The victorious Romans, breathing fury and slaughter, overran the city, recklessly putting to the sword every one they encountered. When they burst into Archimedes' house, they found him lying on the ground drawing geometrical figures in the sand. Not knowing who he was, a soldier ran him through with his sword. If a man who is devoted to the study of science can be so engrossed by such matters as to be oblivious to all else, how much more ought the Christian fix his thoughts on God when he prays, and banish from his mind all earthly cares and distractions.

They are Dead

An English traveler was dining in an inn when an acquaintance, who had not seen him for a long time, came up to him, and sitting down, tried to engage him in conversation. He first of all asked him how his wife was. The traveler returned the curt answer: "She is dead." His friend next inquired how his father was, and again received the brief reply: "He is dead." One more attempt the other made: "And how is your mother?" he asked.

"She is dead," the traveler rejoined, and went on with his dinner without another word. When he had finished, and his friend began to condole with him for having lost so many relatives in so short a time, the man laughed, and said: "All those for whom you made kind inquiries are perfectly well. I only said they were dead because while a hungry man is satisfying his appetite, he cares for nothing else at the time and does not want to be questioned about other people." This man puts to shame those who, while engaged in an infinitely more important occupation than eating, namely saying their prayers, allow their attention to wander to other things.

St. Benedict and the Farmer

St. Benedict was one day passing on horseback along a country road, when he overtook a farmer trudging along on foot. "Well," said the latter, "I'm sorry I didn't take to praying myself; I might be now riding instead of walking; and what an easy way of getting up in the world!" "Not so easy after all," rejoined the saint; "if you will say one 'Our Father' without a distraction, this horse is yours." "Done!" said the farmer, and began, "Our Father who art in heaven," etc.; but scarcely had he reached the middle of the prayer when, looking up suddenly, he asked: "Am I to have the saddle and bridle, too?"

LESSON TWENTY-NINTH

ON THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD

Q. Is it enough to belong to God's Church in order to be saved?

A. It is not enough to belong to the Church in order to be saved, but we must also keep the commandments of God and of the Church.

The Savage and the Piece of Money

Even the heathen know the difference between good and evil. A missionary relates the following incident. One day a savage came to the mission house and begged for a little flour. The missionary gave him some in a jar. When the man got home, he found a silver coin in the flour. The next day he presented himself anew at the mission house, and said: "I have within me a bad and a good man. These two have been disputing together all night long, so that I have had no rest. The good man said: 'The money you found in the flour does not belong to you; give it back to its owner.' The bad man on the other hand said: 'The missionary gave you all that is in the jar, so the money is yours too. Go and buy some brandy with it.' In order to be at peace, I have brought the piece of silver to you." Here we see the truth of what St. Paul says: "The

flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another" (Gal. v. 17).

An Old Man at the Olympian Games

The Spartans, the bravest of all the tribes that peopled ancient Greece, were renowned among the nations of antiquity on account of their reverence for old age. No young Spartan would keep his seat if an old man was standing near. It happened once at the Olympian games, in which all Greece took part, that an aged man could not find a place. He wandered about the amphitheater, but no one would give up his seat to him. But when he came to where the Spartans were seated, all the young men stood up, and respectfully made room for him. Thereupon the old man said: "All Greeks know what virtue is; the Spartans alone practice it."

The Sentinel on Guard at Pompeii

Obedience is a virtue. It is well known that the two cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii were destroyed by an eruption of Vesuvius in the year 79 A.D. and remained until the present day buried beneath a thick crust of lava. In the course of excavations recently made there, thirty-eight skeletons of Roman soldiers were discovered on guard at Pompeii. Thus we see that the captain, together with the men under his command, remained at their post in spite of the imminent peril to their lives and the universal flight of the inhabitants of the town. Rather than desert their post without the word of

command, the soldiers preferred to be buried beneath the glowing streams of lava. Would that men were equally faithful toward God and His commandments.

Q. Which are the commandments that contain the whole law of God?

A. The commandments which contain the whole law of God are these two; 1st, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with thy whole strength, and with thy whole mind; 2d, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

The Son who Rescued a Servant

We ought to love God because He has given His Son for us. A certain gentleman was one day walking on the seashore with his son, attended by a footman. Suddenly the latter, heedlessly going too close to the water's edge, slipped and fell into a deep place. The master, who knew that the man could not swim, bade his son go in after him and pull him out of the water. The bystanders were amazed at the master's goodness toward his servant; they said: "That gentleman really seems to care more for his servant than he does for his son, for he lets his son risk his life to rescue his servant." Such was God's conduct in regard to man. He sent His Son to die upon the cross to save us, His servants. Thus St. Augustine says: "To save Thy servants, O Lord, Thou didst sacrifice Thy Son." Is there not every reason why the servant should love his master with all his heart?

In Deed and in Truth

The love of one's neighbor does not consist as much in fair words as in charitable deeds. Once, at a dinner-party, the conversation turned upon the grievous misfortunes that had overtaken a certain family. All the guests expressed the deepest commiseration for the unhappy individuals. One gentleman only took no part in the conversation, though he listened attentively to what was said. After a while he took out his purse, and laid a bank-note upon a plate, saying: "Herewith I testify my sympathy with the impoverished family." Turning to his neighbor, he added, handing him the plate: "With what amount will you show your pity for them?" The plate was passed round the table and a considerable sum was thus collected for the destitute family. Deeds are of more value than words.

The Innocent Servant Self-accused

A few years ago the following occurrence was reported in the newspapers. In a town near Cologne there was a Christian servant-maid in the house of a Jewish tradesman. One day the Jew missed $75. Directly he suspected the maid, and accused her of the theft. She indignantly denied having taken the money. Her master would not believe her; he went on endeavoring to frighten her by threats; at last he said she should be let off scot free if only she would confess that she had stolen the money. For the sake of peace the foolish girl actually admitted in the presence of her master and

one of his friends that she was guilty. Immediately the man gave information to the police; she was tried in court and sentenced to three months' imprisonment. Five years after, when removing to another house, the Jew found the sum that he had lost. The girl's father heard of this, and insisted that she should be publicly acquitted. But how bitterly she had expiated the falsehood forced from her; three months' imprisonment and five years' shame, and loss of character!

The Bed-ridden Old Woman by the North Sea

The inhabitants of a small town on the North Sea had a gala day in the early part of the year. As the sea was frozen, all, young and old, went to disport themselves on the ice, where they remained for hours. No one was left at home except one poor old woman; she was confined to her bed, as she suffered from pains in her feet, contracted through exposure to wet and cold. Her husband was a fisherman, and until they were both quite old she had to help him earn their daily bread. Her bed stood by the window, whence she could see the beach and the merrymaking on the ice. Suddenly, toward evening, she observed a cloud on the horizon of a peculiar hue, which rapidly increased in size. She knew directly that this was a harbinger of the spring-tide; the flood was coming, the ice would break up, and every one upon it would lose his life. When she perceived that the people continued to move about on the ice, without noticing their danger, she grew alarmed. She could not run out to warn them; what should she do to attract their attention? She crept out of bed, struck a light, set

fire to the house, and dragged herself out into the open air. Soon the whole building was in flames. When the merrymakers upon the ice observed the conflagration they all hastened back to their homes. It was high time they did so; for shortly after the ice broke up. The good old woman had saved the townsfolk through her energy and self-sacrifice.

The Rude Boy and the Echo

He who is well-mannered will be well treated. A little boy who did not know anything about an echo, one day when at play in a meadow, shouted: "Hello! Hello!" Directly from a wood in the vicinity he heard a shout in answer: "Hello! Hello!" The boy was astonished, and called out: "Who are you?" Immediately the response came back: "Who are you?" Angry at having his own words repeated, he shouted more loudly: "You are a stupid fellow!" and "stupid fellow" came back to him from the wood. He then made use of more abusive epithets, and one and all were correctly returned. At last he went across to the wood to look for the boy whom he supposed to be mocking him, that he might revenge himself on him; but he sought in vain, there was no one there. Then he ran home and complained to his mother that there was a bad boy hidden in the wood who had been calling him names. His mother listened to his tale, and when he had finished, said to him: "What you heard was only the echo of your own words. If you had spoken kindly, kind words would have come back to you out of the wood. Listen, my boy; it is the same in one's daily life. The treatment

we meet with from others depends in a great measure on the way we behave to them. If we are courteous and kind to those with whom we come into contact, they will be courteous and kind to us. If we are uncivil to them, we cannot expect anything but incivility on their part."

Q. Why do these two commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the whole law of God?

A. These two commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the whole law of God because all the other commandments are given either to help us to keep these two, or to direct us how to shun what is opposed to them.

The Shipwrecked Missionaries

Heroic charity is to love one's neighbor more than one's self. A few years ago a ship was wrecked off the Philippine Islands. When it struck on the rock, the greatest confusion prevailed on board, each of the passengers thinking only of saving his own life. The only persons who remained calm and self-possessed were two Catholic missionaries, who exerted themselves to the utmost to help their fellow-passengers to get into the boats. When there was no hope left of saving the ship, the sailors called to the missionaries to take to the boats also. One of them did so; the other expressed his determination not to leave the vessel until every one on board had been saved. Almost immediately the ship sank. As she went down, the missionary was

seen on the deck, kneeling in prayer; then he was swallowed up in the waves. Some of the crew managed to keep afloat by swimming; one man swam up to the life-boat, in which was the other missionary, and, clinging to it, begged to be picked up. But unfortunately the boat was already overfull, and he could not be taken in. Then the missionary said: "He shall have my place," and with these words he sprang into the water and disappeared immediately, while the sailor was taken up into the boat. Here we see the influence of true religion. Were there more piety in the world it would be a far better place than it is. (This incident occurred in January, 1899, the vessel in question being the *Remus*, a Spanish steamer.)

The Ruined Plants

He who breaks one commandment is guilty of all. Several beautiful plants in flower were planted by their owner in one pot. His little son seeing this, pulled up two or three of the plants saying: "There are too many flowers in this pot; there is not space for them all to grow." A few days later, the boy noticed that the plants that were left in the pot began to wither and droop; for their roots were entangled one with another so that pulling out some loosened all and prevented them from striking firm root. The boy's father availed himself of this occasion to teach his son a lesson: "My dear child," he said, "it is just the same with God's commandments. They are all connected one with another. He who violates one, is guilty of transgressing all."

Q. Which are the commandments of God?

A. The commandments of God are these ten:—

1st. I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them.

An Acquaintance Formed on the Battle-field

Even on earth God sometimes rewards in a striking manner those who keep His commandments. In the Prusso-Austrian War of 1866 a Prussian Hussar came close to an Austrian officer who was severely wounded. The officer begged him to send a bullet through his head, to put him out of his agony. This the soldier refused to do; on the contrary, he carried him to the nearest hospital, where his wounds were dressed. As a reward for this kind act, the officer gave him his gold watch. When the war was over, the Hussar in question wanted to get a situation as valet. Chance led him to the castle of Prince Anton Esterhazy, in Austria-Hungary, while in quest of an engagement. He was shown into the prince's presence, who as soon as he saw him, felt sure he had seen him before. He asked him accordingly whether he had been in the last war. The man replied in the affirmative. "And," pursued the prince, "did you not save the life of an Austrian officer?" The soldier said that he had, and exhibited the watch which had

been given him as a reward. "I shall certainly take you into my service," the prince replied, "for I owe you a debt of gratitude for having saved my life." The man liked it well in that household, for his master treated him more as a friend than as a servant. Even in this life almighty God often rewards in a striking manner good deeds done for Him, and the strict observance of His law. The irreligious ascribe all such events to chance.

The Bishop's Walking-stick

The most trifling actions are of value, if done for the love of God. In the year 1867 an aged American bishop asked for an audience of Pope Pius IX. He entered the antechamber leaning on a stout stick; one of the officials invited him to lay it aside, and allow a servant to conduct him into the Pope's presence. But the bishop declined the proffered support, saying he was an old man, and too long accustomed to use a stick to be able to dispense with it. On entering the Holy Father's presence, he handed the stick to him, begging that he would graciously accept it to support his steps. The Pope, however, returned it to the bishop immediately, saying it was too heavy for him to use; besides, he would not deprive an old man of the stay of his declining years. Then the bishop requested his Holiness to unscrew the knob of the stick. The knob was accordingly removed, and out of the most ordinary-looking stick another made of pure gold was taken. The aged prelate, addressing the Pope, said: "Your Holiness, this stick is a present offered to you by the faithful of

my diocese. We pray you to accept it, and I will keep the case as a memento." This stick may be regarded as an emblem of our good works. The simplest actions, however trifling they at first appear, as for instance the two brass mites of the poor widow, are nevertheless precious and meritorious in God's sight if they are performed for love of Him. The charity which actuates them transforms them to gold. Gold is the symbol of charity.

2d. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Thomas More's Obedience to his Conscience

There must be no ambiguity about an oath. Sir Thomas More, High Chancellor of England in the reign of King Henry VIII, was cast into prison and sentenced to death because he would not sanction the decrees of that cruel monarch in his encroachments on the rights of the Church. More might have saved his life if he would have taken the oath of the royal supremacy. His friends counseled him to take the oath, making use of these words: "I swear to obey all that my lord and king may ordain," but making at the same time a mental reservation that he referred to the ordinances of the Lord of lords and King of kings. But More was too honorable, too conscientious, to have recourse to this subterfuge: "I must swear what is required of me and not what I think," he answered. "I will not take the oath and deceive either myself or other people."

3d. Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

A Post Refused

Those who are required by their employers to profane the Lord's day, ought to seek employment elsewhere. A new manager had been appointed in a large manufactory in Germany. On his arrival to undertake his duties, he was informed that his services would be required on Sunday, as the works were open on that day as well as the other days of the week. Although he was to receive a very good salary, the man instantly said that he must decline the post if he had to work on Sundays. As he had excellent testimonials, the manufacturer tried to make terms with him, promising that he should only be required to work half the day on Sunday. But the newly appointed manager would not accept this compromise: "It is not for the sake of my own ease and convenience," he said, "that I want my Sundays free, but because I am a Catholic, and therefore bound in conscience not to work on Sunday. I must decline the position you offer me. You will doubtless have no difficulty in meeting with some one to fill it." The master was pleased with this resolute behavior. He saw that the man was conscientious and trustworthy, and reliance could be placed on him. He would not let him go, but engaged that he should always have Sundays free.

The Example of Columbus

To sanctify the Lord's day is the way to find happiness and the divine blessing. Christopher

Columbus, who discovered America, used always to observe Sunday as a day of rest. All the crew had a holiday, and the vessels rode at anchor; they were on that day almost like floating churches. God rewarded his piety by success in his enterprise; he was the first to set foot on the shores of the new world.

4th. Honor thy father and thy mother.

The Student and the Convict

Children ought to respect their parents, even though they cannot be blind to their faults. Under the rule of the Emperor Joseph II, the convicts were employed on the public works; among other things they used to sweep and cleanse the streets of Vienna. One day a privy councillor and confidant of the emperor was looking out of his window at a gang of convicts at work in the street below, when he saw a young man respectably dressed, apparently a student, go up to one of the convicts and kiss his hand. The minister of state instantly had the young man brought into his presence, and represented to him that it was not the proper thing to do to kiss the hand of a criminal. The student's eyes filled with tears as he answered: "But that was my father, sir." This beautiful instance of filial affection made a great impression on the minister. He related the circumstance to the emperor, who was so delighted with it that he pardoned the convict and ordered him to be liberated; for he said a man who could bring up a son so well and inspire him with such loyal affection could not be a bad

man. Furthermore, he granted a stipend to the student during his term of study.

Filial Virtue Rewarded

In the month of May, 1887, the following instance of filial self-sacrifice appeared in a Vienna paper. Not far from Vienna there lived an aged couple who were dependent for their maintenance on their only daughter. She held a situation as book-keeper in a stationer's shop in the town. Quite unexpectedly the business was given up, and for a long time the young woman could not meet with any other suitable post. Being deprived of the means of supporting her old parents, she bethought herself of selling her hair, which was long and thick, to a hair-dresser. When the money thus obtained was spent, she cast about in her mind for some other way of obtaining bread for her parents. Then some one told her that a dentist who had a large practice in the town, would give 10 gulden (about $5) for every sound front tooth which he himself extracted. Now the girl had beautiful teeth, and she immediately resolved to sell them. On her going to the dentist, he inquired the reason why she wished to part with her teeth, and when he heard it, he was so struck with admiration at her self-devotion, that he refused to take out her teeth, and made her a present of 100 gulden. Shortly after he visited her parents, and asked to be admitted as a suitor for their daughter's hand, as he had never met with such self-sacrificing affection. In due time they were married.

5th. Thou shalt not kill.

A Truly Brave Man

It is a cowardly act to take one's own life. A certain officer so completely lost heart in consequence of several reverses of fortune that he resolved to put an end to his life. Taking his revolver, he repaired to a wood, to put a bullet through his brain. When he reached a denser part of the wood, in his agitation he did not notice that he was not alone; some peasants were there, looking for mushrooms. Just as the officer raised the revolver to his head, a kind-hearted man sprang forward, and wrenched the weapon out of his grasp. Thereupon the officer drew his sword, and pointed it at the man; he, however, showed no sign of fear, but said boldly: "Strike if you will; I am not afraid of death. I have more courage than you have. For twenty long years I have had nothing but misfortune, and I have borne all my troubles with patience." These words, and the undismayed behavior of a man who was his companion in suffering, brought the officer to reason. He renounced his intention of committing suicide, and entered into friendly conversation with his humble companion, who had been the means of deterring him from a sinful and cowardly act.

A Nail in a Skull

A sexton was engaged in digging a fresh grave. While at work he came upon the skeleton of a corpse which had been buried twenty years before. He threw the bones aside, the skull as well as the

rest. After a while he noticed that the skull moved. He took it up, and to his horror saw a large nail firmly embedded in it. The old man began to bethink himself who had been buried in that grave. He soon recollected: it was a man who, while recovering from a long illness, died suddenly. His widow was still living. The gravedigger went at once to the magistrate, and gave information of the occurrence. The widow was summoned to appear, and on being shown the skull with the nail in it, immediately confessed that she had murdered her husband. She was condemned to penal servitude for life. Presently the magistrate remembered that he had another question to put to the sexton; he sent for him again, and asked him how it was that the skull moved, and thus attracted his attention. The man replied that a toad had crept into it, and caused it to move. Hence we see that the just judgment of God made use of a contemptible reptile to bring a secret murder to light after a space of twenty years.

6th. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

The Children of Naumburg

Innocence meets with respect. In the year 1432 the fierce Hussites laid siege to the town of Naumburg, with the design of laying it waste. The idea occurred to the inhabitants that they might send a deputation of their children, dressed in mourning, to the enemy's camp, to implore the Hussite leader, Protocop, to show clemency toward their elders. Although Protocop was naturally a cruel man, yet he

was touched by the sight of the company of innocent children. He caused them to be feasted with cherries, which were then in season, and promised to desist from the destruction of the town. In memory of this event, Naumburg keeps the so-called cherry-feast every year; children go in procession through the streets, singing and shouting, carrying branches with ripe cherries on them.— If man loves innocence, how much more does God love it!

7th. Thou shalt not steal.

The Lying Usurer

Usury brings no blessing. A poor man who was in urgent need of $50, went to a money-lender in the neighboring town and asked him to lend him that sum for three months. The money-lender agreed to do so, but he obliged the poor man to sign a promissory note for $75. As the peasant required the money pressingly, he signed the paper. On his way home he stopped at a public house, and told his story in the hearing of all present. A policeman who happened to be sitting by, rose up and bade the man come with him to the police court at once. As soon as they got there, the man's deposition was taken down, and the money-lender summoned to appear. On his arrival the magistrate said to him: "Did you not lend a man $50 to-day?" The usurer declared that he had not lent any one any money that day. Then the poor man was brought forward, and the magistrate asked the money-lender if he knew him. He

answered : "Not in the slightest." Had he not lent him $50? the magistrate inquired. Again he answered in the negative. "Does not that man owe you anything at all?" the magistrate once more asked ; and again the answer was "No." "In that case," the magistrate said, "sign this statement that he is not in your debt." The usurer reluctantly attached his signature to the document and went his way. That same day he went to the countryman to whom he had lent the $50 and reproached him with having cheated him out of his money. "You surely mean to repay me the loan," he said. "Why," the other replied, "you have just declared in court that I do not owe you a cent. Let me hear nothing more of you." Thus the usurer defeated his own ends.

8th. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

The Wonderful Whistle

A boy was traveling by train with his father. As the lad persistently kept his head out of the window, his father warned him that he might easily lose his hat. Finding no heed was paid to this admonition, the man suddenly whisked his son's hat from his head, and hid it. "There now, you see you have lost your hat," he said reproachfully. The boy began to cry; and presently his father said : "Never mind ; if I whistle, we shall get your hat back." So he whistled, and at the same time produced the hat and set it on the boy's head. A few minutes

later, while the man was talking to his wife, the boy snatched his father's hat and flung it out of the window. When he saw the angry look on the man's face, he said: "Whistle again, father, and we shall get it back."

The Peddler Makes a Purchase

There was a girl who, like many others, was dearly fond of fine clothes. She laid by her money for the purpose of purchasing a showy dress. One day she brought home ten yards of material for which she had paid $4 a yard. Her father, who knew nothing about such wares, asked her what was the price of the stuff. The girl, afraid lest her father should scold her for having paid so much for it, said that it cost only a dollar. Somewhat later, when the girl was out, a peddler came to the door and offered his goods for sale. Seeing the fine material on the table, he asked what price had been paid for it. The father, in all good faith, said: "A dollar the yard." Thereupon the peddler said he would give $2 ready money, and the father let him have it. When his daughter came home he told her with exultation what a good stroke of business he had made, adding that now she could get a better dress for herself. But when the girl heard what her father had done, she turned white to the lips, and wringing her hands in vexation, told him with tears the whole truth. The man was very angry with her for telling him a falsehood, and said it served her quite right; she was justly punished for her untruthfulness.

Sowing Ducats

There was once a man who loved a hoax, and often played a joke off on his children. One day when he was writing a letter, his little daughter came up to the writing-table, and seeing ten bright gold coins lying there, she asked where they came from. Her father said: "The ducats grow on a bush, called the gold-bush. They are planted in the ground as beans are, and a plant grows up with ducats hanging on the branches." While he went on writing the little girl quietly took the ducats off the table, ran out into the garden, and buried them in the ground. Then she went back to her father in triumph, saying: "You will have a fine lot of ducats, father; I have sown all those." The man sprang up from his desk. "Come with me directly," he said, "and show me where you put them." The child pointed out the spot, but the ducats were not to be found; either she had forgotten where she put them, or more probably a man at work in the garden had seen what she did and hastened to appropriate the coins. See what a bad thing it is to say what is not true.

The Saint and the Robbers

Those who are strictly truthful are universally respected. St. John of Canti was once attacked and robbed by highwaymen. Before the latter released him, they asked him if he had nothing more on his person? He replied that he had not; but before he had gone far he remembered that he had a few pieces of gold sewn into his cloak. He hastened

after the robbers and told them of this. They were so amazed at the candor and truthfulness of the man that they restored to him all that they had taken from him. Hence we see that even godless men are compelled to reverence virtue in others.

A Tyrolese Hero

We ought not to lie even though doing so should bring advantage to ourselves or others. Peter Mayer, the Tyrolese marksman who fought at the side of Andreas Hofer against the French in 1809 for the independence of his country, gave an admirable example of strict adhesion to truth. Mayer kept an inn on the mountain side at Schebs, about four miles from Brixen. He fell into the hands of the French, when they became masters of his country. As he was taken with arms in his hand, he was condemned to death. But as Mayer, though only twenty-two years of age, was known to be a man of high principle, and was universally beloved, several persons of position and influence took up his cause; among others the kind-hearted consort of the French general pleaded for his pardon. A simple plan of rescuing him was devised: he was to make a declaration in writing that he had not been aware that subsequently to the conclusion of peace between France and Austria, all further hostilities were to be suspended in his own land. But this the Tyrolese hero refused to do, in spite of the persuasions and tears of his wife and relatives. "I will not purchase my life by a lie," he said. Consequently he was shot on the 20th of February, 1810, on the same day that Andreas Hofer was

executed for the defense of his fatherland This youthful hero is an example of truthfulness for all succeeding ages.

9th. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

Joseph the Patriarch and King David

In the histories of the Patriarch Joseph and of King David we have examples of a great victory and a great fall under the ninth commandment,—examples that teach us what we must do in like circumstances and what we must avoid. Joseph, industrious and prayerful, fled in terror from the solicitations of his master's wife; David, idle and for the moment forgetful of God, sees the wife of Urias, and immediately plunges into sin. Joseph's life was crowned with success and glory; David's was blackened with murder, and ruin overtook him and his kingdom.

10th. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

A Bishop's Conduct at a Fire

In 1781 a fire broke out in the town of Auch in France; a great number of houses were in flames. The archbishop, who happened to be there, hastened to the scene of the disaster, to encourage the firemen. When the conflagration was at its height, the lamentations of a woman reached his ear; wringing her hands, she kept repeating: "Will no one rescue my two children?" The archbishop inquired into the facts of the case, and then offered a reward of 3000 francs (about $600) to any one who would

rescue the children. No one dared to enter the burning house. The bishop exclaimed: "Then I will go myself!" Throwing off his archiepiscopal cassock, he dipped his cloak in water and fastening it round him, boldly mounted a ladder placed against the wall. In a few moments he came down, carrying two little children in his arms. The admiration and delight of the onlookers were indescribable. The prelate gave the children to their mother, saying: "The sum promised to the rescuer, which I have myself earned, shall be appropriated to the relief of the sufferers."

First Angels, then Devils

God sends men poverty for their spiritual profit. St. Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence (1459), once saw, while walking in the streets of the town, a vision of angels ascending and descending on the roof of a certain house. He inquired who dwelt there, and was informed that it was inhabited by a poor widow with her three daughters, who were in great poverty. From that time forth the prelate regularly sent them considerable pecuniary assistance. Somewhat later, whilst passing by the house, he saw not angels, but evil spirits hovering over it. He made investigation, and discovered that now the inmates led a self-indulgent, pleasure-seeking life, read bad books, and neglected their religious duties. Immediately he stopped the alms they received. God deals with us in like manner. Many people He does not allow to become rich, because He sees that riches would prove their eternal perdition.

The Stone-mason, Rich and Poor

Riches are apt to make men forget God; poverty brings them nearer to Him. In the time of the Emperor Justin there was a stone-mason named Eulogius, who was very poor in earthly goods, but rich in Christian virtues. One day when he was raising some blocks of stone he lit upon a great treasure; all of a sudden he was a rich man. He gave up his work, rented a splendid palace in Constantinople, and soon rose to a high position; finally he was made captain of the Imperial Guard. Alas! since he had become rich he had forgotten God, and diverged from the path of virtue. One day a hermit, an old friend, visited him and earnestly besought him to think more of his soul's salvation and serve God more faithfully. But Eulogius was rude to him, and had him driven out of his mansion. Nothing daunted, his pious friend began to offer fervent prayers to God, entreating Him to bring Eulogius back to the way of virtue. His petition was soon granted. The emperor discovered a conspiracy in which Eulogius was involved. The latter barely contrived to save himself by the skin of his teeth; his wealth, of which he could take nothing with him in his flight, was confiscated. He found himself utterly destitute, and was obliged to resume his old industry as a mason. Once more his former friend, the old hermit, came to see him, and this time he met with a hearty welcome. Eulogius began to resume his early habits of piety and forsook his evil courses. Hence we see that poverty leads us to

God, rather than riches. Man is only the steward, not the owner, of the earthly riches which are committed to him.

Q. Who gave the ten commandments?

A. God Himself gave the ten commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai, and Christ Our Lord confirmed them.

The Emperor Francis Joseph and the Sentry

In the year 1885 the Emperor Francis Joseph I went out hunting with a numerous suite in the neighborhood of Gödöllö in Hungary, where there is a royal residence. As he was riding back to the castle at the conclusion of the day's sport, he wished to make a short cut which would take him through the courtyard of an arsenal. But in the gateway the sentry stepped before him, and pointing his bayonet at him, cried: "No admittance!" It was evident that the soldier did not recognize the emperor, who was wearing a hunting costume. The monarch was therefore obliged to turn back, and proceed to the palace by a more circuitous route. The next morning the colonel sent for the soldier in question, and said to him: "Yesterday you stood in his Majesty's path and pointed your bayonet at him." After a brief pause he again addressed the man, who was trembling from head to foot. "In order that this may not happen again, you are not to act as sentry any more. From this day forth you are promoted to the rank of corporal. And in order to enable you to recognize your commander-in-chief, his Majesty sends you his por-

trait ten times over." So saying the colonel placed ten silver gulden in the man's hand. If earthly monarchs show such favor to an obedient subject, how richly will God one day reward our obedience!

Even if it were the King Himself

A short time back the following anecdote was recorded in the newspapers concerning the king of Italy. A soldier was mounting guard at the entrance of a park in Rome; he had been ordered on no account to permit any one to enter the gardens. (This command is generally issued when rifle-practice is going on in the vicinity.) The king of Italy came up to the park gates, and wanted to pass in. The sentry recognized him, and gave the customary salute. But when the king was on the point of entering the park, the soldier placed himself in his path, and said: "Your Majesty, I have received orders not to allow any one to go in, even were it the king himself. I beg your Majesty to desist." The king smilingly retraced his steps, the sentinel saluting as before. The next day the general sent for him and praised him for his strict obedience. He at the same time handed to him a gold watch, which was a present from the king. On the case these words were engraved: "To the soldier who did his duty." If earthly sovereigns thus reward obedience, how richly will God recompense those who keep His precepts.

LESSON THIRTIETH

ON THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

Q. What is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is: I am the Lord thy God: thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.

The Destroyer of Idols

It is folly to worship idols. An idolater had a Christian boy in his employ. In the house there was one large idol and several smaller ones around it, and the boy often said to his master: "Your gods are made of clay; they cannot move. How, then, can they possibly help us men?" But the heathen paid no heed to what the boy said. One day when he had gone out for some time, during his absence the boy took a stout cudgel and broke all the gods to pieces, except the large one, in whose hand he placed the stick. When the master of the house returned home, he was furious, and threatened to take the boy's life. The boy, however, showed no sign of fear. "Do you not believe," he said, "that the big god has beaten his little brothers?" "Of course not," the man cried. "Why, he cannot move hand or foot." "If," the boy replied, "you do not believe your god capable of doing what my little strength can do, how can he be the great God who made heaven and earth?" The idolater was struck with those

words. He could make no rejoinder. Presently he knocked the big idol off its pedestal, and falling on his knees, for the first time worshiped the true and living God.

Q. How does the first commandment help us to keep the great commandment of the love of God?

A. The first commandment helps us to keep the great commandment of the love of God because it commands us to adore God alone.

The Chinese Means of Getting Rain

Superstition leads to the greatest follies. After a season of prolonged drought, when rain is much needed, the Chinese resort to the following means to obtain it. (1) First of all, they close the south gate of the city. (In the Chinese language the word for *south* also means *misfortune.*) Consequently, in many towns the south gate remains closed for months together, no one being permitted to go in or out by it. (2) If closing the gate is of no avail, processions are formed which go about the streets making a fearful din with drums and loud cries, for the purpose of rousing the spirits of the rain-clouds. (3) If this means of putting an end to the drought also fails, other methods are adopted: every day shots are fired into the wells and springs. (4) If the drought still continues, they do not shrink from committing sacrilege. For the Chinese consider the dead as sacred, and hold them in the greatest reverence. Yet in the hope of obtaining their end, they disinter some dead bodies and burn them. If per-

chance rain comes soon after, they regard the exhumed persons as having been to blame for the drought. (5) But if burning the dead brings no relief to the parched land, as a last resort the greatest criminals are released from prison, — several hundreds at once; or else a vow is made to release the miscreants if rain falls within a fixed period, — say, three days or a week. And if no rain comes, then the prisoners are put to death instead of being restored to liberty. Why should those unfortunate individuals lose their lives for a thing which they have no power to control? See the folly of superstition, and the miserable condition of the benighted heathen.

Q. How do we adore God?

A. We adore God by faith, hope, and charity, by prayer and sacrifice.

A Switchman True to Duty

It was the business of a signalman at a crossing on a railway to shift the points so that the up-coming train should run on to the right line. At the last moment before a train rushed by, his little four-year-old boy running up to him, fell over the rails. As the engine was almost on the spot, there was no time to rescue the child. His father might have altered the points again and thus directed the course of the train wrongly; but then there would have been the risk of a collision taking place. So all he did was to order the child in stentorian tones: "Lie still! Do not stir!" and allow the train to pass over the pros-

trate body of the boy. In terror he awaited the result. Imagine his joy when he saw the child safe and sound. When the directors learned what had occurred, they promoted the man to a better place on the line on account of his faithful adherence to duty. God will certainly reward obedience both here and hereafter.

Q. How may the first commandment be broken?

A. The first commandment may be broken by giving to a creature the honor which belongs to God alone; by false worship; and by attributing to a creature a perfection which belongs to God alone.

The End of an Apostate Bishop

Renegade Catholics often see their sin in the hour of death. At the time of the French Revolution, when hundreds of ecclesiastics were put to death, some priests, alas! apostatized from the faith in order to save their lives. The Bishop of Paris, John Joseph Gobel, was one of these renegades. He actually went so far as to declare before the National Assembly that up to that time he had taught a false religion, and that henceforward he would profess the new religion of liberty and equality. He even trampled under foot his ecclesiastical insignia. But he soon received the reward of his treachery. He incurred the displeasure of the tyrant Robespierre, who sentenced him to be guillotined. Then Bishop Gobel's eyes were opened; all at once he saw the full guilt of the crime he had committed against the Christian religion, and bitterly he repented of the

scandal he had given to the people and to the clergy. On the eve of his execution he wrote to his curate as follows: "To-morrow I shall expiate my sin against God and our holy faith by a violent death. As the opportunity of an oral confession is denied me, I herewith send you my confession in writing. I also entreat you to afford me your ministerial assistance. Of your charity, come early to-morrow to the door of my prison, and give me sacerdotal absolution in a whisper. Pray, do not forget to say the words, *Ab omni vinculo excommunicationis*" (From every bond of excommunication). It is to be hoped that the unhappy bishop, in virtue of this priestly absolution, passed through the gates of the prison to the realms of eternal bliss. Like him, many other apostates confessed and deplored their sin on their deathbed, and endeavored to repair the past.

Cato's Sandals

Cato, the well-known Roman, was one day asked by a superstitious individual what it signified if one's sandals were gnawed by mice. He answered, "That means nothing. But it means something for the mice if they get under my sandals."

Q. Do those who make use of spells and charms, or who believe in dreams, in mediums, spiritists, fortune-tellers, and the like, sin against the first commandment?

A. Those who make use of spells and charms, or who believe in dreams, in mediums, spiritists, fortune-tellers, and the like, sin against the first commandment, because they attribute to creatures perfections which belong to God alone.

The Secret why the Cows Gave no Milk

Stupid people are often superstitious. Uneducated and unintelligent people, when at a loss to account for misfortunes of different kinds, are apt, in their ignorance, to ascribe them to the influence of certain persons against whom they have a grudge. They call such persons witches, and say that they have bewitched this or that thing. A farmer's wife, who could not imagine the reason why her cows for some time past had given very little milk, was guilty of that folly. She went to the parish priest, and actually asked him for a charm. The priest, who guessed the cause of the calamity, wrote a few words on a piece of paper, folded it, sealed it, and gave it to the woman, bidding her to take it in her hand and go to the cowshed at night and carefully search every corner. The woman did so; and the very first night she went down to the stable, she found a man who was brother to her maid-servant, hidden there. When the mistress made her appearance, he started up and ran away, leaving a milk-can behind. From that day forth the cows gave as much milk, and as regularly, as ever. After a few days had passed, the woman went to thank the priest for his efficacious assistance. She opened the envelope and asked him to read the charm that he had written on the paper. The good man laughed heartily. Unfolding the paper, he read out these words : "To watch you need, and to pay good heed ; then you will not complain of witchcraft again."

The Fourteenth Guest Proves a Thief

Superstitious persons often punish themselves. A gentleman, being desirous of entertaining a few of his friends, gave a dinner at an hotel, to which fifteen guests were invited. Only thirteen, however, put in an appearance, for at the last moment two gentlemen were prevented from fulfilling their engagement, and sent an excuse for their non-arrival at the appointed hour. The other guests remarked with dismay that they were thirteen in number, and recalled the foolish superstition that, if that unlucky number sat down to table, one was sure to die before a year had passed. The host, to remove this unpleasant impression, went down to the coffee-room and asked a young man who was sitting there to join the company. The stranger was only too glad to accept the invitation, and he showed his appreciation of the good cheer set before him. At the end of the dinner he rose and took leave, warmly thanking his host. When, somewhat later, the friends dispersed, they discovered, on going into the anteroom to put on their overcoats, that all the best ones had disappeared. Number fourteen had shown his gratitude for a good dinner by carrying away the garments of his fellow-guests! The thirteen guests paid dearly for their superstition, and heartily wished the fourteenth had been dispensed with. Whether they were cured of their superstitious belief, history does not record. It is a well-known fact that the most pronounced unbelievers are generally the most superstitious of all.

The Fatal Picture

Philip, king of the Franks, heard that it was prophesied that if he destroyed a certain picture his death would immediately follow. To show his contempt for such superstitious sayings, he had the picture in question brought to him, and with his own hand flung it into the fire. Nothing happened to him, we need hardly say, and the superstitious people were quite out of countenance.

Q. Are sins against faith, hope, and charity also sins against the first commandment?

A. Sins against faith, hope, and charity are also sins against the first commandment.

A Heathen Emperor and his Christian Servants

Those who deny their faith are always despised. The Emperor Constantius Chlorus, the father of Constantine the Great (who reigned about 300 A.D.), wished, once upon a time, to put the Christians who were about his court to the test. So he had all his courtiers and servants called into his presence, and required every one of them to sacrifice to the heathen deities, threatening to dismiss any one who should refuse to comply with this command. Those who were Christians resolutely refused to scatter incense on the altars of idols; one alone of their number proved false to his faith, and did as was required of him, thinking thereby to gain his master's favor. How vain was this anticipation! The emperor, address-

ing him, said: "Now I see that you are unfaithful to your God. If your heavenly Master cannot trust in your fidelity, of a truth your earthly master cannot place any confidence in you." Thereupon he dismissed him summarily from his service, while he rewarded the others and gave them proofs of the confidence he placed in them.

Q. How does a person sin against faith?

A. A person sins against faith, 1st, by not trying to know what God has taught; 2d, by refusing to believe all that God has taught; 3d, by neglecting to profess his belief in what God has taught.

An Outside and Inside View of St. Peter's

Serious study of the doctrines of our faith will soon destroy all prejudice. A nobleman who was visiting Rome for the first time, being admitted to an audience of Pope Gregory XVI, was asked by his Holiness what he thought of St. Peter's. He replied: "I confess that, looked at from without, the vast edifice impressed me unfavorably rather than otherwise; but when I entered within, still more after I had spent some hours there, I felt an immense admiration for it." "It is just the same," the Holy Father remarked, "with many doctrines of the Catholic Church. Regarded superficially they seem strange and unattractive; but when one looks below the surface and enters into the spirit of the Church's teaching, prejudices vanish and her doctrines commend themselves to the sincere inquirer."

The Man who Believed Nothing, and yet Believed what No One Else Believed

A priest was returning with several other persons from a pilgrimage by train. A stranger entered and took a vacant place in the railway carriage occupied by the party of pilgrims. When he saw who were his traveling companions, and noticed the rosaries in their hands, he could not refrain from making some contemptuous remarks concerning their credulity, as he termed their faith, ending by saying in a boastful manner: "As for me, I believe in nothing." "Pardon me, sir," the priest rejoined, "you believe a great deal. In one respect you believe more than any of us do." The gentleman expressed the wish to be told what was meant; how, he asked, did he believe what they did not? For some time he had to wait for an answer; but as he would not be refused, and declared that he should not take offense, whatever was said, the priest at length replied: "My dear sir, you believe that you are a very clever fellow. I can assure you that none of us believe that." All the people present laughed heartily; the unfortunate man colored painfully and changed coaches at the next depot.

Q. How do we fail to try to know what God has taught?

A. We fail to try to know what God has taught by neglecting to learn the Christian doctrine.

Copernicus' Telescope

How foolishly those persons act who listen to the Church's teachings with preconceived mistrust, and

believe them less readily than commonplace assertions. Copernicus, the discoverer of the solar system, was, as is well known, a Canon of the cathedral of Frauenburg in East Prussia. Many relics and curiosities are said to be exhibited in that cathedral. On one occasion the verger, who was showing a party of sight-seers over the sacred edifice, paused before one of the altars, and made some remark concerning the relics that were preserved there. A gentleman who was of the party began immediately to raise objections, and call in question the authenticity of the relics. The verger replied, "We have the Church's authentication, sir, and that excludes all doubt." But the skeptic averred that the verdict of the Church did not content him. The visitors next passed into the sacristy; and the verger, opening a cupboard into which a quantity of old things had been thrown, took out a long tin tube, and just for the fun of the thing, said: "Ladies and gentlemen, I have something of remarkable interest to show you here. This is the tube of Copernicus' telescope." The object in question was passed from hand to hand, being regarded with great veneration. Then the same gentleman who had been so incredulous in regard to the relics of the saints, observed: "How is it possible that so important a relic of historic value can be left lying among all that lumber?" On hearing this the verger laughed outright. "My good sir," he said, "the telescope was only invented sixty years after Copernicus' death. You believed what I said unhesitatingly when, merely as a joke, I showed you this tube, which is used to make tapers; yet just now,

when I spoke of religious relics, the authenticity of which is vouched for by the testimony of the Church for centuries, you would not believe a word I said. Excuse the liberty I took, ladies and gentlemen; every one who knows anything of history could see that I was only jesting." The skeptic looked thoroughly discomfited, and made his way out of the cathedral as speedily as he could. This is an instance of what frequently occurs. Many persons will on no account give credit to the Church's teaching. Even were an angel from heaven to attest the truth of her doctrines, it would have no effect on them; yet they are ready to believe the most idiotic folly.

Q. Who are they who do not believe all that God has taught?

A. They who do not believe all that God has taught are the heretics and infidels.

Ariadne's Ball

Religion rescues us from eternal perdition. The following legend is handed down to us from pagan times. Minos, the king of the island of Crete, caused a subterranean building to be constructed consisting of a great number of galleries, the plan of which was extremely complicated. There was no hope for any one who lost his way in this labyrinth, as it was called; for in it there dwelt a savage monster, the minotaur, who pursued and tore in pieces every individual who attempted to explore the intricate windings of the galleries. By the king's orders

condemned criminals were thrown to this monster, and young men, whom certain towns had to furnish as a yearly tribute, were also sacrificed to it. At length a brave youth of Athens, named Theseus, resolved to put the monster to death. He went to Crete, and got into favor with Ariadne, the king's daughter. On hearing of his purpose, she gave him a ball of thread, and advised him to fasten one end of the thread at the entrance of the labyrinth, and unwind it as he went along. Theseus did as she counseled him. Taking the ball in his hand, he proceeded through the underground passages till he encountered the minotaur and slew him. Then following the thread, he easily found his way back out of the labyrinth. This fable is replete with instruction for the Christian. Our life is in itself a labyrinth, and whoso is devoid of religious belief, who does not follow the sure guidance of the Christian faith, is certain to be lost. But he whose faith is firm and practical will pass with comparative ease through life's rough way, and will be enabled to escape everlasting damnation.

Q. Who are they who neglect to profess their belief in what God has taught?

A. They who neglect to profess their belief in what God has taught are all those who fail to acknowledge the true Church in which they really believe.

The Testimony of Voltaire

Religion acts as a deterrent from crime. The atheist Voltaire, one of the most inveterate adversaries of

Christianity, had two of his friends (D'Alembert and Diderot) dining with him one day. As his guests began to indulge in conversation of a blasphemous nature, Voltaire interrupted them, saying: "I beg you will not talk in that way before my servants. Pray wait until they have left the room. For if they hear our principles and take into their heads to act on them, they will murder me this very night." The following passage cut out also occurs in one of his writings: "If I were in a position of authority, I would not tolerate any underlings about my person who did not believe in the existence of God; for they would be sure to poison me, if they could gain anything by it." Many wealthy and influential persons act as Voltaire did; although they are themselves destitute of religious beliefs, yet they keep up an outward respect for religion for fear lest their lives or their property should be endangered. They are fully aware that faith acts upon the conscience and deters from the commission of many a crime. This accounts for the fact that even Jews and non-Catholics send their Catholic servants to Mass and to confession.

Q. Can they who fail to profess their faith in the true Church in which they believe expect to be saved while in that state?

A. They who fail to profess their faith in the true Church in which they believe cannot expect to be saved while in that state, for Christ has said: "Whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven."

The Unhappy Results of Socialism

Religion is a solace in misfortune. The following incident appeared recently in the newspapers. A man who professed Socialistic opinions one day boasted to his comrades in the drinking saloon that he had at last succeeded in uprooting all the religious beliefs of his wife, who was once a very pious woman, a task which it had taken him three years to accomplish. His companions naturally congratulated and praised him for having made a convert. That same evening, when he went home, he saw a crowd collected in front of the house where he lived. On inquiring the cause, he was informed that something dreadful had happened; he went in, and there he saw his wife and his three children lying dead on the floor. Beside the woman lay a paper on which these words were written: "While I kept my religious beliefs I bore all the trials and sufferings of my life with patience, looking for the reward God promises to the Christian. But since my husband — who is worse than a murderer — undermined my faith, I have been utterly miserable. My children shall not meet with the same fate; to prevent it I have poisoned them all." Hence it will be seen of what man is capable with religion and without it. Without religious faith man is like a shipwrecked mariner, and the gravest defect in the theories of modern Socialism is, that, carried to their logical conclusion, they would undermine all authority, thus eliminating the family, the State, religion, and God

Q. Are we obliged to make open profession of our faith?

A. We are obliged to make open profession of our faith as often as God's honor, our neighbor's spiritual good, or our own requires it. "Whosoever," says Christ, "shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven."

Rudolf of Hapsburg and the Scepter

We ought to be ready, when occasion requires, openly to confess our faith. When Rudolf of Hapsburg was crowned as emperor of Germany in the cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle, the scepter which was to be placed in his hand could not be found. All the officials were dismayed; the emperor alone did not lose his self-possession. Stretching out his hand, he took a cross that stood near, and held that in the place of a scepter. By this fearless profession of his Christian faith he placed his dominions and his imperial dignity under the protection of the cross. Ever since the monarchs of the Hapsburg dynasty have had a cross at the summit of their crown.

Q. Which are the sins against hope?

A. The sins against hope are presumption and despair.

Hannibal's Presumption

Hannibal, the famous Carthaginian general, waged war against the Romans, defeating them ignominiously on several occasions. After the battle of Cannes, when the Roman army was completely

routed (216 B.C.), seventy thousand of their troops being left upon the field, he felt confident that the good fortune which had hitherto attended him would not forsake him. He therefore remained in Capua and gave himself and his soldiers up to a life of indolence and luxury. Meanwhile the Romans collected fresh forces, and with a large army defeated Hannibal in a pitched battle, and later on destroyed the city of Carthage. When Hannibal saw that misfortune had overtaken him, he exclaimed: "While I could have gone on conquering, I would not; now that I fain would, I cannot." So it is with the Christian who relies too much on God's long-suffering mercy, and says in his heart: "God has so often been merciful, He will be merciful still; I can do what I please." Those who act thus will sooner or later be put to shame.

Q. What is presumption?

A. Presumption is a rash expectation of salvation without making proper use of the necessary means to obtain it.

A Murderer of Body and Soul

He who rashly presumes on the mercy of God will be put to shame. A certain heathen who hated a Christian with bitter hatred, conceived the idea of revenging himself on him in a truly diabolical manner. Meeting him one day in a lonely place, he held a dagger to his breast, and said: "Unless you deny God and the Redeemer I will strike you to the heart." Now the Christian loved his life; he thought

within himself: If I do commit a sin, I can do penance and obtain forgiveness from God. He then said: "I do not believe in God, nor in Christ the Redeemer." No sooner had he uttered those words than his impious enemy plunged the dagger into his breast with a fiendish laugh, exclaiming: "Now I am satisfied, for you will not only lose the life of the body, but that of the soul also." Such is the result of presuming upon the mercy of God.

Q. What is despair?
A. Despair is the loss of hope in God's mercy.

How St. Francis of Sales was Tried

Prayer to the Mother of God is a help in the time of temptation. While St. Francis of Sales, the Bishop of Geneva, was studying in Paris, a singular temptation beset him. He was then seventeen years of age; it seemed to him that some one was continually whispering in his ear these words: "God destines you to be eternally lost; nothing will avail to avert your fate." This idea took such hold of the young man's mind that he could not sleep and did not care to eat. He gradually grew thin and appeared to be quite out of health. In this extremity he sought the help of the Mother of God. He went into a church, knelt down before her image, and uttered the well-known prayer: "Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, and sought thy intercession, was left unaided." Again and again he knelt before that same image and

repeated the same prayer. Then suddenly he felt himself completely freed from the temptation. His health returned, and he regained his former joyous, cheerful frame of mind. From that time forth he cherished a deep devotion to the Mother of God.

Q. How do we sin against the love of God?

A. We sin against the love of God by all sin, but particularly by mortal sin.

Androcles and the Lion

When one commits mortal sin he falls short of the gratitude which even irrational animals are wont to show. A slave who had run away from his master concealed himself in a cave in the desert. Presently a lion came up to him, limping and whining. Androcles (such was the name of the slave), overcoming his natural fear of the animal, examined his paw; in it he found a large thorn which had caused it to fester. He drew out the thorn and caused the gathering to discharge. The lion testified his gratitude by bringing him meat every day and behaving like a tame animal. Now it happened shortly after, that a party of hunters came that way; they captured the lion and the fugitive slave as well, and brought both to Rome. There the slave was sentenced to be torn by wild beasts in the amphitheater in punishment of his unfaithfulness. On the day appointed he was brought into the arena, and a powerful lion was let loose. But far from rending him, the animal crouched at his feet and licked his hands —it was the selfsame lion from whose foot he had

extracted the thorn. All the spectators — and there were thousands present — were astonished beyond measure ; they called upon Androcles for an explanation of the singular occurrence. He told them what had taken place in the desert. The people were so pleased at the gratitude evinced by the lion that they demanded both his liberation and that of the slave, which was accordingly granted. This irrational animal puts to shame many persons whose thanklessness has given rise to the saying : "Ingratitude is the world's recompense."

LESSON THIRTY-FIRST

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT — ON THE HONOR AND INVOCATION OF SAINTS

Q. Does the first commandment forbid the honoring of the saints?

A. The first commandment does not forbid the honoring of the saints, but rather approves of it; because by honoring the saints, who are the chosen friends of God, we honor God Himself.

St. Wenceslaus in the Snow

Imitation is the sincerest flattery, and the best way to honor the saints and through them to honor God is to follow their example. On one very severe and snowy night St. Wenceslaus was on his way to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament in the neighboring church. His servant who accompanied him complained that his feet, though well shod, were numb with cold, while the saint, who wore but sandals, seemed not to suffer at all. "Put your feet into the prints of mine, and fear not," said the saint. This the servant did, and presently a genial warmth spread from his feet throughout his whole body. This is a lively image of what takes places in the soul of the Christian who tries to walk in the footsteps of the saints by imitating their virtues.

Q. Does the first commandment forbid us to pray to the saints?

A. The first commandment does not forbid us to pray to the saints.

A Father is Told to Teach his Unruly Son to Pray

Prayer is the surest means of obtaining the grace of amendment. A man once went to a priest and asked him to advise him what to do with his son to make him behave better. He said he had flogged him several times, made him go hungry, and shut him up in the cold, but nothing had any effect on him. Then the priest asked whether the man had made his son pray, and had himself prayed for and with him. He acknowledged that he had not done so, but promised to have recourse to that means. He kept his word, and this means proved effectual; the boy corrected his ways and grew up to be a worthy, God-fearing man.

Q. What do we mean by praying to the saints?

A. By praying to the saints we mean the asking of their help and prayers.

A Miraculous Deliverance

The year 1618 was marked by the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War. It is also memorable on account of the sentence passed on the imperial viceroys in Prague, Martinitz and Slawata, as well as their private secretary, Fabricius, who were condemned by the Protestants to be thrown out of the windows of the

royal palace. This is how it came to pass. On stringent decrees against the Protestants being issued by the Emperor Nathias, a large body of those heretics, headed by Count Thurn, entered forcibly into the royal place in Prague and charged the viceroy and governor with having instigated their august master to take these drastic measures. They announced their intention of putting the supposed authors of the decrees to immediate death. The two governors begged that at least a short time might be granted them to prepare for death, and that a confessor might be sent for. This privilege was however denied them; the crowd below insisted that according to an ancient Bohemian custom in regard to traitors, they should be thrown out of window. This was accordingly done. In spite of their expostulations and entreaties they were seized, conveyed to a window overlooking the deep but then dry moat of the castle, and flung down from a great height. Martinitz continually uttered the names of Jesus and Mary, invoking their mercy and their aid. The Protestants, hearing this, cried contemptuously: "Let us see whether Mary will come to help him." Martinitz fell, and rose to his feet without having sustained the slightest injury, so that the bystanders were forced to acknowledge that Our Lady had indeed come to his aid. Slawata struck his head against a stone window-sill, and lay on the ground insensible, blood flowing from his mouth. Martinitz lifted him in his arms and carried him away; and although a number of shots were fired at the fugitives, all missed their aim. Friends

came to the help of the wounded man, so that they were both able to effect their escape. The Catholics who witnessed this scene doubted not that these men were rescued by a miraculous intervention of Providence, but the heretics said it was the effect of magic. The statement that the men fell upon heaps of dust, or that bushes broke their fall, is fictitious. We learn from this incident that we cannot do better than call upon Jesus and Mary in the hour of peril and sore distress.

Q. How do we know that the saints hear us?

A. We know that the saints hear us, because they are with God, who makes our prayers known to them.

The Castle of St. Angelo in Rome

God hears and answers united prayer more readily. In the year 590, in consequence of a great inundation, a pestilence broke out in Rome; Pope Pelagius II was one of its numerous victims. His successor on the papal throne, Gregory the Great, ordered that a procession should go around the city on three consecutive days, to implore the divine assistance. As the procession passed by the tomb of Hadrian on the third day an angel was seen hovering over the monument, and sheathing the sword he held in his hand. This apparition caused universal rejoicing, for every one believed it to be a sign that the pestilence would cease its ravages. And truly so it was; on the third day not a single fresh case of sickness occurred. In commemoration of this historic fact Hadrian's tomb

was called the castle of St. Angelo, and on the topmost point a statue was placed, that of an angel of large size and highly gilded, in the act of sheathing his sword. Many instances prove the efficacy of united prayer.

Q. Why do we believe that the saints will help us?

A. We believe that the saints will help us because both they and we are members of the same Church, and they love us as their brethren.

Augustine's Voyage was not Prevented

God often does not grant our prayers because what we ask would be hurtful to us. St. Monica, the mother of the great St. Augustine, for many years prayed for her son's conversion without receiving an answer to her petition. Presently Augustine, who was professor of rhetoric in Carthage, informed her of his intention of going to Rome, in order to have a wider sphere of action. His mother, fearing that the great city would offer fresh dangers and temptations for her son, wept bitterly and endeavored to dissuade him from carrying out his project. She spent the whole of the next night in prayer, beseeching God to prevent him from embarking on the voyage; but the next morning, to her grief, she heard that he had already set sail. Why, it may be asked, did almighty God not grant her prayer? Because Augustine's residence in Italy was to be for his spiritual profit; for in Milan he made the acquaintance of Bishop Ambrose, whose eloquent discourses had the effect of converting him. Later on Augustine himself said: "O Lord,

Thou didst not at that time fulfill my mother's desire, in order to grant her that for which she had for so long a time besought Thee."

Q. How are the saints and we members of the same Church?

A. The saints and we are members of the same Church, because the Church in heaven and the Church on earth are one and the same Church, and all its members are in communion with one another.

St. Antoninus and the Bread

The real body of Christ in the Eucharist under the form of bread is a figure of His mystical body — the members adhere to one another even as do the particles in a piece of bread. This adhesion is broken by excommunication and regained by repentance and absolution. To illustrate this point, St. Antoninus one day caused a piece of bread to be set before him, and over it he pronounced an anathema. Immediately it became as a cinder and fell to pieces; he then repeated the words of absolution, and the bread forthwith resumed its former appearance. "From this," concluded the bishop, "learn the meaning of the 'communion of saints' and beg God that those who are cut off may be brought back by repentance."

Q. What is the communion of the members of the Church called?

A. The communion of the members of the Church is called the communion of saints.

Purgatory in Painting

A certain pastor added to his church a chapel dedicated to the souls in purgatory. An artist decorated it with a fresco representing the souls in flames, and among them he placed an unmistakable picture of a neighboring parish priest. The latter came to see the new chapel, recognized his portrait, and indignantly demanded that he be freed from purgatory immediately. The painter, when called and questioned, spoke thus: "Reverend Sir, I heard you prove lately in an eloquent sermon that all who die without having made satisfaction shall suffer the pains of purgatory. Now, over a year ago I did some work on your church for which I have not yet been paid. I will leave you in purgatory forever unless your Reverence will kindly see to it that I am paid." Needless to say, the debt was soon paid; and the painter changed the picture so as to represent him as ascending to heaven after having made full atonement for his sins.

Q. What does the communion of saints mean?

A. The communion of saints means the union which exists between the members of the Church on earth with one another, and with the blessed in heaven and with the suffering souls in purgatory.

Sts. Gregory and Basil

These two saints lived in the sincerest friendship. When Basil died, Gregory was greatly grieved, but knowing his life, he felt sure he was with God. In

moments of temptation, Gregory would say: "O great friend of God and of me! procure me liberty from this temptation or else the power to resist."

Q. What benefits are derived from the communion of saints?

A. The following benefits are derived from the communion of saints: — the faithful on earth assist one another by their prayers and good works, and they are aided by the intercession of the saints in heaven, while both the saints in heaven and the faithful on earth help the souls in purgatory.

The Sick Child and his Self-willed Mother

A child was suddenly attacked by a dangerous malady. He was the only child and the darling of his foolishly fond mother, who ceased not to implore God almighty to restore him to health. Her prayers however seemed fruitless, the child grew worse; the woman in her distress went to the priest and poured out her grief to him. He advised her rather to pray that God's holy will might be done, than that her child might be spared to her. But she cried out indignantly: "No, I cannot do that; my will must be done." The child got well, but alas! he fell into all manner of vice and finally ended his days on the gallows. How much better it would have been for that man had he died when an innocent child! We ought to leave it to God to deny or grant our petitions, and submit our will to His, for He knows the future.

Q. Does the first commandment forbid us to honor relics?

A. The first commandment does not forbid us to honor relics, because relics are the bodies of the saints, or objects directly connected with them or with Our Lord.

The Crucifix Removed

A party of men, drinking in a saloon, were indulging in ungodly and improper conversation. The hotel-keeper, a pious, God-fearing man, was much displeased and shocked at the talk that was going on. He attempted to give a different turn to the conversation, but his guests continued to make use of profane language, so he rose up from the table and, taking down a crucifix which hung on the wall, carried it out of the room. The company looked astonished, and asked him whatever he had done that for. He answered: "It is not meet that Our Lord should hear the way you are talking." The men looked ashamed, and emptied their glasses without another word. This occurrence got wind in the place, and from that time the number of quiet and respectable people who frequented that house greatly increased. To show cowardice is not the way to prosper.

Q. Does the first commandment forbid the making of images?

A. The first commandment does forbid the making of images if they are made to be adored as gods, but it does not forbid the making of them to put us in mind of Jesus Christ, His Blessed Mother, and the saints.

St. Mary of Egypt in the Church of the Holy Cross

The Holy Spirit frequently imparts grace by means of pictures. St. Mary of Egypt († 431) when only twelve years of age left her father's house and betook herself to the city of Alexandria, where for seventeen years she led a dissolute life. One day she saw a great number of people about to embark on some vessels lying in the harbor; they were going to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. On that festival it was customary to expose the cross of the Redeemer of mankind in the Church of the Holy Cross, situated on Mount Calvary, for the veneration of the faithful. Mary of Egypt, out of curiosity, determined to go with the others to Jerusalem. When she reached the city, she attempted to go with the crowd into the church, but an invisible hand seemed to hold her back with irresistible force. Startled and alarmed, she shrank into a corner of the vestibule, and pondered over the reason of this singular occurrence. At that juncture her eyes fell upon a statue of the Mother of God on the wall opposite to her. Then long-forgotten memories crowded into her mind of the prayers she used to say when, an innocent maiden, she knelt before the picture of the Mother of God in her parents' house and of the pious instructions her mother imparted to her. For the first time for many, many years she sent up a heartfelt prayer to Our Blessed Lady, and implored her succor. Her conscience also awoke and reproached her on account of her licentious life. She

repented of her sins, and made a firm resolution to withdraw into the desert and lead a life of penance. Thereupon she again attempted to cross the threshold of the church, and met with no check. The very next day she made a full confession of her evil life, and for fifty years she lived as a penitent in the desert.

Q. Is it right to show respect to the pictures and images of Christ and His saints?

A. It is right to show respect to the pictures and images of Christ and His saints, because they are the representations and memorials of them.

Tears of Penitence

A man of position and influence, who for years had given up going to Mass and approaching the sacraments, one day thought — perhaps at the instigation of his guardian angel — that he would go to church again. When there, he passed in review the people who were present, and let his eyes wander over the objects of interest in the church. Suddenly they rested on a singular painting. What did it represent? It represented King David, the royal penitent, on his knees, tears of contrition rolling down his cheeks. Beside him stood an angel, who caught those tears as they fell in a golden chalice, in order to present them before the throne of God. Underneath the picture these words were inscribed, "David sinned once, and wept ever after; thou sinnest continually and dost not ever weep." Gazing on that picture, and reading those words, the man

was struck with contrition, for he felt the words applied to him; he shed tears of repentance, and resolved, from that time forth, to live as a good Christian should. What joy his guardian angel must have felt when he carried those tears on high to the throne of God! Hence we see that the Holy Spirit frequently makes use of pictures to touch the hearts of sinners.

Q. Is it allowed to pray to the crucifix or to the images and relics of the saints?

A. It is not allowed to pray to the crucifix or images and relics of the saints, for they have no life, nor power to help us, nor sense to hear us.

The Soldier whose Feet were Shot Off

The following incident appeared in the newspapers shortly after the battle of Königgrätz (1866). Great excitement prevailed one morning in a village in Austria, for the tidings spread amongst the inhabitants that, during the night, some impious hand had mutilated the figure of the Saviour on a crucifix that stood by the wayside, both feet having been struck off. The perpetrator of this sacrilegious act was not discovered. Not long after war was declared, and the young man who had committed the outrage was called out for military service. He joined the ranks, and took part in the battle of Königgrätz. Almost the first shot fired from the enemy's cannon struck him; the ball carried away both his feet. The army chaplain was soon at his side; he was able to make his confession and receive absolution.

Before his death, which occurred in a few hours' time, he begged the priest to publish the occurrence, that all men might see how terribly God had punished him for his wicked act.

Q. Why do we pray before the crucifix and the images and relics of the saints?

A. We pray before the crucifix and images and relics of the saints because they enliven our devotion by exciting pious affections and desires, and by reminding us of Christ and of the saints, that we may imitate their virtues.

The Emperor's Effigy on the Coins of the Realm

It is sinful to desecrate sacred pictures. Previous to the Council of Nicæa, in the year 787, when formal approval was given to the veneration of images by the faithful, thousands of images of Christ and of the saints were broken to pieces or burnt by the iconoclasts. Several of the Greek emperors favored and abetted the iconoclasts. A saintly hermit named Stephen was desirous of demonstrating to the emperor in a forcible manner that the desecration and destruction of images was most displeasing to almighty God. On the emperor asking his opinion on this point, the hermit took a coin and inquired of the bystanders whose was the image and superscription it bore. They replied: "The emperor's." He asked further: "Do I incur a penalty if I trample this effigy under foot?" "Assuredly you do," was the answer; "for you commit an act of high treason,

which is punishable with death." Then the hermit exclaimed : "Oh, how blind you are ! You consider one who shows disrespect to the image of an earthly monarch to be deserving of death, whereas you attach no blame to one who desecrates and destroys the images of Christ, the King of kings."

LESSON THIRTY-SECOND

FROM THE SECOND TO THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Q. What is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

The Loyalty of the Inhabitants of Freiburg

The Kurfürst of Saxony, Frederic the mild, quarreled with his brother William, Duke of Weimar, respecting the division of territory. The Kurfürst of Saxony thereupon took possession of the town of Freiburg, which belonged to his brother William, and required the representatives of the city to pay him homage, and furnish a contingent of young men to bear arms against their former ruler. The members of the town council assembled to deliberate upon the course to be pursued. At the close of their conference they repaired, two and two, with uncovered heads, to the market-place, where the elector and his troops had taken up their quarters. The gray-haired burgomaster then addressed the elector in the following terms: "We are prepared gladly to lay down our lives for your Highness, yet we cannot possibly resolve to violate our oath of fidelity to the Duke of

Weimar. As dutiful subjects, we would rather part with our lives than be false to our duty. If it must be so, I am ready first of all to lay my head upon the block." So saying, he knelt down and bared his neck. The elector was moved almost to tears by this generous act on the part of the burgomaster. "We shall certainly not behead such loyal subjects," he said. "We cannot afford to part with honest citizens, men of honor." He then and there revoked his former demands. From that time forth the town of Freiburg bears the title of "faithful." It is obligatory upon one to keep a promise made upon oath.

St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch

We ought frequently to call upon God's holy name with reverence. This saint, whom the Church commemorates on the 1st of February, delighted in uttering the name of Jesus. Tradition relates that he was the child whom Our Lord called to Him, when He rebuked the ambition of his disciples. We read in the Gospel that on the way to Capharnaum the apostles disputed among themselves which of them should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. On entering the city, Christ called to Him one of the children standing round the house doors, and taking him, a boy about four years of age, by the hand, set him in the midst of them, and said: "Amen, I say to you, unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3, 4). That boy was Ignatius. It is recorded

of him that in later years he used frequently to run to the spot whither Our Lord beckoned him, and kissing the ground, say to his companions: "Look, here in this place the Lord Jesus took me in His arms and embraced me." When he was grown up, Ignatius became a priest, and afterward he was made bishop of the large and important see of Antioch, where St. Peter had previously labored. The town soon became Christian. When Trajan, the Roman emperor, on occasion of a military expedition, entered the town and found the heathen temples empty and deserted, he asked the governor whose fault it was that this state of things existed. The governor informed him that the bishop of the Christians, Ignatius, was to blame for it. The emperor summoned the gray-haired prelate to his presence, and asked him whether he was indeed the evil spirit who had stirred up sedition in the city? Ignatius answered: "He cannot be called an evil spirit who bears God in his heart." The emperor said: "I suppose you mean Jesus of Nazareth." Ignatius replied in the affirmative, and proceeded to expound the folly of worshiping heathen deities. The emperor waxed very wroth, and turning to his soldiers, said: "*Ad leonem*," that is to say, "Cast him to the lions." Thus the sentence of death was passed on Ignatius; he was to be thrown to the lions in Rome. The soldiers seized him and conducted him to Rome. The Christians of that city wanted to rescue him and save his life, but Ignatius wrote a letter, entreating them not to deprive him of the crown of martyrdom. On his arrival in Rome he was exposed in the amphitheater,

before a vast multitude of spectators, to the attack of two hungry lions. Standing there, he prayed aloud, saying: "The name of Jesus shall never depart from my lips; and even if it were to do so, it cannot be obliterated from my heart." The heathen spectators were filled with admiration at the constancy of this old man, and the joy wherewith he met death. The lions tore him to pieces and devoured him, leaving only his heart and a few bones. On his heart the name of Jesus was distinctly visible, traced in blue veins. The Christians went by night to the amphitheater and fetched away his relics; they were conveyed to Antioch, where they were deposited under the altar with the utmost reverence and veneration. This was in the year 107. God caused this saint to be so highly privileged because of his love and veneration for the name of Jesus.

Q. What are we commanded by the second commandment?

A. We are commanded by the second commandment to speak with reverence of God and of the saints, and of all holy things, and to keep our lawful oaths and vows.

Regulus a Model of Honor

Oaths must be strictly kept. The Roman general Regulus set an admirable example to all who have to take an oath. About the year 250 B.C., he was taken prisoner in battle by the Carthaginians, the enemies of the Romans, and kept in captivity for six long, weary years. At the end of this period his

captors sent him to Rome, to endeavor to make terms of peace. Before his departure he was compelled to swear solemnly that he would return to the Carthaginian camp in case he failed in inducing the Romans to conclude a treaty of peace. On reaching Rome he informed the Senate of the weakness of the Carthaginians, and urged them to renew hostilities. After this, he prepared to return to the enemy. All, even the heathen high priests, did their utmost to dissuade him from doing so. But he said: "I do not dread the tortures to which the Carthaginians may put me, as I do the shame of an act of perjury." It is said that the Carthaginians crucified him on his return. If a heathen acts so conscientiously, how much the more ought a Christian to hold sacred the oath he has taken.

A Lesson in Reverence

We ought to endeavor to prevent the name of God from being used with levity and thoughtlessness. A man took his mother-in-law to live with him. Now she had the bad habit of exclaiming: "Good God!" at every trifling surprise; her son-in-law often told her of it, but he could not cure her. Whenever he spoke about it, she always answered: "I mean no harm by it." At length he determined to break her of the irreverent habit by a less pleasant means. One day when she was sitting in the garden he went out and began to hunt for caterpillars, with which the garden was infested, close by where she was seated. Every time he found a caterpillar, he called out: "I have found one, mother-in-law." At

first she said she was glad of it, but since he kept constantly exclaiming: "Mother-in-law, I have found another!" she got vexed, and told him he was making a fool of her. He answered in her own words: "I mean no harm by it," and went on as before. At last the woman lost patience, and getting up from her seat, went into the house. Her son followed her in, and said: "Look, mother, you who are a poor mortal are annoyed if one calls to you again and again for nothing. And do you imagine that almighty God is not displeased at hearing you take His holy name in vain so many times every day of your life for no reason at all?" The old lady saw the justice of what was said, and corrected herself. Very seldom did she inadvertently make use of her habitual exclamation, and whenever she did, a word from her son was sufficient to put her on her guard for the future. It is a good work to endeavor to put a stop to the reprehensible custom of taking God's name in vain in ordinary conversation.

The Monastic Punster

In a certain monastery there was a brother, extraordinary for his great good nature and invariably cheerful disposition. He was round and rosy, brimful of humor, and an incorrigible punster. Whenever his companions were out of sorts, he was always ready with a joke to restore them to good humor, and he was especially apt at applying quotations from Scripture to the ordinary affairs of life. For this he was often severely punished by his Superior, who was called the Father Minister. One day the pro-

vincial was present at dinner on his annual visit, and during the repast our jovial friend, a look of preternatural solemnity on his face, knelt in the middle of the refectory, doing one of his many penances. The provincial inquired in a whisper into the trouble, and was told the cause. He then called the culprit to him and said: "It grieves me sorely to see you thus, dinnerless and in durance vile; but if you will give me a sample of your wit to suit the occasion, I will remit your punishment." Without a moment's hesitation, the monk replied: "Volo, pater, ut ubi ego sum, illic sit et minister meus." (John xvii. 24. I wish, father, that where I am, there also may be my minister.) He was forgiven on the spot, for a jocular reference to a sacred theme is not necessarily irreverent. We are Christians, not Pharisees.

Q. What is an oath?

A. An oath is the calling upon God to witness the truth of what we say.

The Good Faith of Frederic the Fair

Louis IV of Bavaria and Frederic the Fair of Austria, both claimed the imperial crown of Germany, and took up arms in defense of their pretensions. Louis IV made his rival prisoner in the battle of Mühlberg, and kept him in custody for three years. After the expiration of that period, he sent him to his brother, who carried on hostilities during his absence, to persuade him to put an end to the war; he previously administered to his prisoner a solemn oath that he would come back in case his

embassy was unsuccessful. Frederic could not prevail upon his brother to lay down his arms, and consequently returned to prison. But the emperor was so touched by his honorable conduct, that he liberated him immediately and gave him a share in the government. This occurred in 1325.

A Perjury Disclosed

A merchant who had to undertake a long journey, requested the proprietor of the house in which he lived to take care of a large sum of money which he had in his possession, while he should be absent. The landlord willingly accepted the trust. But when the merchant returned home, and asked him to deliver up to him the money left in his charge, the landlord declared that he had never had any property given into his keeping. The merchant brought an action against him. Now when the landlord had to appear before the magistrate and was required to take the usual oath before making his statement, he handed a stout walking stick to one of the officers of the court. That stick was hollow, and in it the bank-notes were concealed. The wily rogue thought that he could swear without a scruple that he had not the money, if he previously gave the stick containing it into the hand of another. The merchant was appalled when he heard the man perjure himself, and was unable to make good his cause. But vengeance soon overtook the culprit. As he was leaving the court on the conclusion of the case, in his agitation he stumbled over his stick, and fell down several steps and broke his

leg. The stick also snapped asunder and out tumbled all the bank-notes. The bystanders were much impressed by the speedy and striking chastise ment which followed upon this act of perjury.

Q. When may we take an oath?

A. We may take an oath when it is ordered by lawful authority or required for God's honor or for our own or our neighbor's good.

A Brother who Refused to be Reconciled

An oath that is sinful must not be kept. Two brothers were at enmity with each other. A mutual friend took great pains to induce them to be reconciled. One of the two was willing to make friends, but the other would not hear of a reconciliation. "I will never make my peace with him," he declared. "I have sworn before God that I will always regard him as my enemy. I do not mean to break my oath." His friend replied: "The oath itself is sinful; therefore it is not binding. It was tantamount to saying to God: 'Lord, I will not observe Thy law, I intend to do the will of Thine enemy, the devil.' To keep such an oath is to add sin to sin." The man then saw his error, and consented to a reconciliation with his brother.

The Battle of Warna, 1444

Ladislaus, the king of Hungary, had concluded a treaty of peace with the sultan, Murad II, and confirmed it with an oath. In spite of this, he took up arms against him. In the first pitched battle the

king and all the flower of his nobles were defeated and slain. He who swears falsely draws down upon himself the curse of God, — that is to say, he is overtaken by misfortune and misery.

Q. What is necessary to make an oath lawful?

A. To make an oath lawful it is necessary that what we swear to be true, and that there be a sufficient cause for taking an oath.

The Military Oath is no mere Formality

An oath must be taken with deliberation. When at one time recruits for the army were sought in Holland, a French soldier presented himself for enlistment. He had such excellent testimonials that he was assigned rank as a captain. On entering the Dutch army he was required to take the usual oaths. They were dictated to him, and he repeated them, first: I swear fidelity to the constitution. The next ran thus: I swear to defend and protect the reformed religion to the utmost of my power. This he refused to repeat, saying: "I am a Catholic and cannot swear to do that." He was told that it was a simple formality; he need not trouble himself about the purport of the words, but might repeat them without scruple of conscience. But he answered: "No, when I call God to witness, it is no mere form of words." As he could not reconcile the oath with his conscience, he gave up the post offered him, tempting as it was, and sought another. Truly, he was a noble-minded, conscientious man! Before taking an oath, one ought to consider well

whether one can keep one's word. For the oath once taken, it must be kept.

The Perjured Right Hand

He who swears falsely, calls on himself the curse of God. Henry IV, Emperor of Germany, who attained celebrity through his going to Canossa, found himself, shortly after his return from that far-famed journey, involved in hostilities with Rudolph of Swabia. The latter, although he had sworn allegiance to Henry IV, now disputed with him the imperial dignity. In the battle of Merseberg, which was fought between the contending parties in 1080, Godfrey de Bouillon, whose prowess at the time of the Crusades is well known, cut off the right hand of the rival emperor. It is said that when dying, Rudolph looked mournfully at the wrist from which his hand had been severed, and exclaimed: "Alas! it was with that hand that I swore fealty to my emperor!"

Q. What is a vow?

A. A vow is a deliberate promise made to God to do something that is pleasing to Him.

Why the Church of St. Charles in Vienna was Built

Vows are a means of obtaining divine assistance. In the year 1713 the plague, or, as it was called, the *black death*, broke out in Vienna. All manner of precautions were adopted to prevent the spread of

the pestilence. The schools were closed, meetings and assemblies were proscribed, nay, even the churches stood empty for fear lest the contagion should be communicated by one worshiper to another. In spite of all these regulations, the plague extended its ravages and thousands fell victims to it. At this juncture the then emperor, Charles VI, made a solemn vow in the presence of all his courtiers in the cathedral of St. Stephen, that if God would deliver the town from this scourge he would build a magnificent church in honor of St. Charles Borromeo; and in fact from that day forth the pestilence greatly abated, and erelong disappeared entirely. The emperor fulfilled his vow with a glad heart, and caused the splendid church of St. Charles Borromeo, with its elegant spire and lofty columns, to be erected in thanksgiving. This beautiful edifice was twenty-one years in building; it still stands, an ornament to the city, and a lasting testimony to the efficacy of a pious vow.

The Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau

In the year 1633 the pestilence raged at Ober-Ammergau, a village in Bavaria. The inhabitants earnestly implored the divine mercy, and made a solemn vow to the effect that if they were delivered from the plague, every ten years they would act the Passion play, a representation of Our Lord's Passion, in *tableaux vivants*. From that time not a single person died of the plague in that village. The inhabitants kept their promise; up to the present time every tenth year the Passion play is acted, and on

so grand a scale as to attract crowds from all parts of the world to witness the performance.

Q. Is it a sin not to fulfill our vows?

A. Not to fulfill our vows is a sin, mortal or venial, according to the nature of the vow and the intention we had in making it.

Prince Hal and Jack Falstaff

Vows or promises made without due deliberation or jokingly are not binding. Students of Shakespeare will readily recall the friendship of Prince Hal for Jack Falstaff; their many mad escapades; Jack's dreams of favor and promotion when the prince should have become king; and his cruel disappointment when Henry, having succeeded to the throne, coldly repulsed him in the words: —

> "I know thee not, old man; fall to thy prayers.
> How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!
> Presume not that I am the thing I was;
> For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
> That I have turned away my former self."

The responsibilities of high office sober men, and make them feel that no further room for trifling remains.

The Origin of the Sanctuary of Our Lady at Zell

Louis I, king of Hungary, was engaged in warfare with the Turks. As he was greatly outnumbered by the enemy, before giving battle he promised to erect a handsome church at Maria-Zell, a place of pilgrimage, whither his consort frequently repaired, if almighty

God vouchsafed to give him the victory. He was victorious, and duly fulfilled his promise. This occurred in 1363; the church the king built is still standing.

Clovis' Conversion

Clovis I, king of the Franks, was converted by means of a vow. He had espoused a Christian, named Clotilda, who is now venerated upon the altars of the Church. This saintly queen exerted herself to the utmost to convince her royal spouse of the foolishness of idolatry, and lead him to embrace Christianity. On one occasion, when he was about to march against the Alemanni, Clotilda, on taking leave of him, said: "Do not place thy trust on thy gods, who can do nothing for thee, but on my God, who is almighty and can enable thee to conquer thy enemies." These words recurred to Clovis' mind when his troops began to give way before the foe in the decisive battle of Zülpich in Alsace, and in the time of need he called upon the Christians' God. "My gods," he exclaimed, "have forsaken me. I cry to Thee for help, O God of the Christians. If Thou wilt deliver me out of the hand of the invader, I will myself be baptized, and I will establish Christianity as the religion of my realm." Clovis had scarcely uttered this prayer when tidings were brought to him that the generalissimo of the hostile army had been killed, and the enemy, discouraged by his loss, was falling back. Clovis gained a brilliant victory. After the battle was ended, he exclaimed in a loud voice: "Great and mighty is the God of the Christians!" Clovis faithfully performed his promise, or

vow ; that same year, on Easter Sunday, 496, he was baptized, together with three thousand of his nobles, by Bishop Remigius, in the cathedral at Rheims. Before baptizing him the prelate said : " Bow thy head, O proud monarch ! Burn what as a heathen thou didst adore, and adore as a Christian that which thou didst burn ! " The remains of Clovis and his queen rest in the church erected by him in Paris, and dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul ; it is now known as the Church of St. Genevieve.

Q. What is forbidden by the second commandment?

A. The second Commandment forbids all false, rash, unjust, and unnecessary oaths, blasphemy, cursing, and profane words.

A Magnanimous King

Alboin, king of the Longobards, besieged the city of Pavia for three years. Exasperated at the stubborn resistance of the inhabitants, he swore one day in his anger that he would put them all to death at the point of the sword. At length famine forced the inhabitants to open the gates of the city. As many as possible concealed themselves in cellars and other hiding-places, expecting a general massacre. But the king did not keep the unjust oath he had sworn ; on the contrary, he caused it to be proclaimed that he granted a universal pardon to the people and meant to make the town his royal residence ; in gratitude for this act of clemency, he only asked of them loyal and dutiful obedience.

The Misuse of Speech

The habitual swearer is in a worse plight than one who is deaf and dumb. A man was walking through the streets of a certain town with his son when they saw a young man who was deaf and dumb standing in the doorway of a house. He smiled and nodded to them. "Father," the boy said as they went on, "whenever I see that unfortunate fellow, I feel the deepest commiseration for him. It is a terrible calamity to be unable to hear or speak." He had scarcely uttered these words when they heard a man in the same house pour out a volley of horrible oaths. The boy's father said: "The man who is swearing in that way is far more to be pitied than the deaf and dumb. Better be without the power of speech than employ it as he does to the ruin of his soul."

"I will not have my Father Abused"

One ought not to allow blasphemy to pass unrebuked. A gentleman engaged a carriage to take him some distance. On the way the driver got out of temper with his horses, and, according to a bad habit he had, used very profane language, taking the name of God in vain. The occupant of the carriage could not put up with this: "Look here," he said to the coachman, "you must stop swearing in that way. I will not have my Father abused." The coachman stopped in amazement, and asked what the gentleman meant by saying he had abused his father. "God is my Father," was the reply, "as well as yours

This cursing and swearing is an insult toward God, and in uttering those blasphemies you insult my Father. I will not allow it." The driver muttered a few words of apology, and drove on in silence. Those who listen to blasphemies without uttering a word of rebuke, are put to shame by the lower animals, for dogs bark and snarl if they see their master maltreated.

The Chimney Sweeper's Foolish Prank

One ought to exercise self-control, and not yield at once to every impulse. Two maidservants were employed in drawing up sacks of corn by a rope to the attic in a mill. A chimney sweeper, who happened to be in the house at the time, for a bit of fun, seated himself astride one of the sacks that was being pulled up. The servants complained of the increased weight as they tugged at the rope; and one of them remarked that for the difficulty they had in raising it, one might fancy the devil himself was on it. When the sack was at last raised to the gable door, behold! there was the figure of the sooty chimney sweeper upon it. The girls screamed with fright and let go the rope, so the chimney sweeper, together with the sack, was dashed to the ground, and the man broke both his legs. Such is the lot of those who give way to every foolish impulse and have no self-control.

Q. What is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is: Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

A Pious Railway Official

The blessing of the Church is highly profitable. In a village where there was a railway station, it was observed that one of the men employed on the railway always hurried into church on Sunday just as the Mass was ended. He only got there in time for the blessing. One day as he was leaving the church a gentleman asked him why he habitually came at the conclusion of Mass. The man replied: "I cannot come sooner, as I am not off duty. As soon as ever I am free, I hurry off as quick as I can to the church, so as to be in time to get the blessing. I do not like to begin the week without God's benediction, for 'God's blessing we need, if we wish to succeed.'" Would that every Christian valued the blessing of the Church as highly!

Q. What are we commanded by the third commandment?

A. By the third commandment we are commanded to keep holy the Lord's day and the holy days of obligation, on which we are to give our time to the service and worship of God.

The Emperor Joseph II, Plowing

Labor is no disgrace. In Brünn, the chief town of Moravia, among other curiosities an old plow is preserved, which is thought a great deal of. This is the story attaching to it. One day when the Emperor Joseph II was traveling, he arrived with all his suite at a village called Rausnitz, in Moravia. On the outskirts of the village he saw a tired

laborer toiling at the plow. The emperor went up to him and asked him to let him take his place for a few minutes. The peasant was very much surprised that a well-dressed gentleman should express a wish to drive the plow, and he wondered still more when he saw how awkwardly the stranger handled the plow and how uneven he made the furrows. Shaking his head, he called out to the self-constituted plowman: "My good sir, any one can see you never earned your bread by field work!" "It is not likely," answered one of the emperor's attendants; "plowing certainly does not form a part of an emperor's daily occupations." The laborer was appalled at hearing who the stranger was, but he was delighted with the emperor's condescension. The plow was never used again, but preserved as a relic in the family of the peasant. At a later date it was brought to Brünn, and was exhibited in the international exhibition in Vienna. It was to prove to his subjects that he considered labor to be no disgrace that the emperor put his own royal hand to the plow.

Q. How are we to worship God on Sundays and holy days of obligation?

A. We are to worship God on Sundays and holy days of obligation by hearing Mass, by prayer, and by other good works.

The Conversion of St. Columbinus

It is profitable to read spiritual books. In the life of St. Columbinus, who was of noble rank and held

the post of burgomaster in Sienna, we have an instance of the profit to be derived from reading pious books. Returning one day at noon from the town council, he was very angry with his wife because dinner was not ready. In order to pacify him, she gave him a religious book, the *Lives of the Saints*. At first he threw the book to the ground, but presently he picked it up and began to read some of it. He opened it on the life of St. Mary of Egypt, and was so struck by it that it had a lasting influence on his whole future life. He became an altered man, and led a holy life. He founded an Order and died in 1367.

Q. Are the Sabbath day and the Sunday the same?

A. The Sabbath day and the Sunday are not the same. The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, and is the day which was kept holy in the Old Law; the Sunday is the first day of the week, and is the day which is kept holy in the New Law.

The Conversion of St. Ignatius Loyola

The life of St. Ignatius of Loyola furnishes another instance of what may be gained by reading religious books. He was born at the castle of Loyola in Spain, and served as a page at the court of King Ferdinand V. Stimulated by a keen desire for glory and renown, he exchanged the life of a courtier for that of a warrior. In the army he distinguished himself by his courage and valor, and was nominated commandant of the fortress of Pampeluna, the defense of which was intrusted to him in the Franco-Spanish

war (in 1521). While holding this fortress against the enemy, he was wounded in the leg by a cannon-ball and had to be taken to the hospital. There time hung heavy on his hands, and to while away the weary hours he asked the infirmarian to give him a book. A volume of the *Lives of the Saints* was given to him. The effect produced by the perusal of this book was unexpected. Ignatius saw for the first time wherein true glory consists, and resolved from that time forth to consecrate his life to the service of God and the salvation of his fellow-men. He was then thirty years of age. Conscious that his lack of erudition and literary culture would be a bar to success in his new career, he attended a school where Latin was taught, not shrinking, although a man of thirty-two years of age, to take his place among a class of boys. Subsequently he entered the University of Paris, and took his doctor's degree (1534). As the founder of the Society of Jesus, the work this man effected for the salvation of mankind is perfectly astounding. We may learn of him how beneficial is the perusal of good books. Reading the *Lives of the Saints* is like looking in a mirror; we see ourselves as we are, and realize our shortcomings.

Q. Why does the Church command us to keep the Sunday holy instead of the Sabbath?

A. The Church commands us to keep the Sunday holy instead of the Sabbath because on Sunday Christ rose from the dead, and on Sunday He sent the Holy Ghost upon the apostles.

The Two Shoemakers

In olden times, in the city of Alexandria, there lived two cobblers in the same street, not far from each other. One of them had a numerous family to support, yet his business got better day by day. The other, who had only to provide for his own maintenance, and who worked on Sundays as well as on week days, hardly earned enough for his daily wants. One day, meeting his well-to-do neighbor, he complained to him of his poverty, and asked him how it was he was so much more prosperous than himself. "My good friend," he answered, "I have a secret store, and every Sunday and holy day I go and get something from it." The other begged him to show him his treasure; he promised to do so if he would come to him on the next Sunday. This the poor man did, and the richer cobbler took him with him to the church, where they heard Mass. When they came out the poor man said impatiently, "I did not want to accompany you to Mass. You promised to tell me what the treasure is of which you spoke." "I have fulfilled my promise," his companion replied. "The church is my treasure-house, and the treasure which enriches me is the blessing of God, which I earn by due attendance at holy Mass. Come, too, every Sunday and take your share of it. Believe me, the great Giver of all good has enough and to spare for both of us." — God abandons those who abandon Him. Hence those who break His commands by working on Sundays and holy days of obligation cannot hope to get on well.

Q. What is forbidden by the third commandment?

A. The third commandment forbids all unnecessary servile work and whatever else may hinder the due observance of the Lord's day.

The Godfearing English Ironmaster

It is sinful to do servile work on Sunday without necessity. During his visit to England in 1844, the Russian Emperor, Nicholas I, saw all the objects of interest in London and its environs. One Sunday, wishing to look over a large and celebrated iron foundry, he sent his groom of the chambers to intimate his desire to the owner of the works. Now the latter, whose name was Nasmith, was a godfearing man; he told the messenger that it was impossible to comply with the emperor's request, for his works were always closed on Sunday. The groom replied that it would be easy to open them for a few hours and set the men at work, and by showing himself so obliging Nasmith would certainly gain his imperial Majesty's favor. But the ironmaster answered: "Sir, I value the favor of almighty God more highly than that of the emperor. And even if I wanted to open the works on Sunday, my workpeople would not consent to labor." The messenger then asked whether he would not have work done on Sunday if the queen of England wished it. "Our queen would never require such a thing of her subjects," was the reply. The groom looked astonished, and with many apologies took his leave. He was amazed at the religious faith of this man, who thought more of the favor of God than that of men. Would that

there were more like him, and that the sanctification of Sunday was better observed!

Q. What are servile works?

A. Servile works are those which require labor rather of body than of mind.

The Avaricious Miller

A certain miller who dwelt in a town of France was in the habit, in order to increase his gains, of pursuing his trade upon Sundays and festivals. While all the villagers were at Mass, he might be seen at his mill, and his irreligious conduct became the scandal of the neighborhood. One day he went to work as usual, but seeing the people on their way to church, he hid himself behind the sails of the windmill, which were just then stationary through want of wind. Suddenly a breeze sprang up and his body, caught in the sails, was violently flung into the air. His wife, on coming to seek him, found him dead, his body pierced in many places with the sharp points of the mill sails, and bruised and shattered with the violence of his fall.

Q. Are servile works on Sunday ever lawful?

A. Servile works are lawful on Sunday when the honor of God, the good of our neighbor, or necessity requires them.

An Archbishop Turned Cow-driver

The celebrated Archbishop of Cambrai, Fénelon, was fond of taking long walks in the vicinity of his

residence. One Sunday, while passing through a village, he heard cries and lamentations in one of the cottages. He entered and inquired the cause; the inmates informed him that their cow, on which they mainly depended for their support, had strayed and been lost for two days. It was a black cow, they said, with one white foot. This they told their visitor, little guessing who he was. He said what he could to console them, and gave them some money. On his way back to the city he happened to see a black cow with one white foot browsing in a thicket near the wayside; it had a rope round its neck. The archbishop instantly concluded that this must be the cow whose loss was so bitterly bewailed; he went up to it, laid hold of the rope, and although evening was closing in and the village lay four miles away, he led it back at once to its owners. The joy of the poor folk was indescribable. Some of the villagers had recognized Fénelon as he passed; they ran together, and on hearing of his charitable action, they would not let him return home on foot, but carried him in an armchair on their shoulders all the way, as if in a triumphal procession. Several artists have commemorated in paintings this act on Fénelon's part. Proud people who deem it a degradation to perform some lowly service for their fellow-men, might learn a lesson from this distinguished prelate.

LESSON THIRTY-THIRD

FROM THE FOURTH TO THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

Q. What is the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment is: Honor thy father and thy mother.

The Example of Coriolanus

Children owe respect to their parents. A Roman named Coriolanus was exiled from Rome by his fellow-citizens. He took refuge with the enemies of his country, the Volscians, who made him leader of their army. With a large force he marched against Rome, with the intention of pillaging and sacking the city. The inhabitants were greatly alarmed on hearing of his approach, and acknowledged that they had committed an unjust act in banishing him. In the hope of prevailing on him to withdraw his troops a deputation of the leading citizens, the members of the Senate, was sent out to him, but he refused to spare the city. Then the heathen priests, attired in their sacerdotal robes, were sent out on the same mission. Their entreaties, however, were disregarded. Next they attempted to bribe him with a large sum of money, but Coriolanus repulsed the offer with disdain. As a last resource his mother was sent to the hostile

camp. Volumnia (such was her name), though she had all the pride of a Roman matron, threw herself at her son's feet, and besought him, for her sake, for the sake of his wife and children, not to enslave his country. The fierce warrior could not resist the supplications of her whom he had respected and loved since his childhood; he raised her up and embraced her, exclaiming: "O my mother, thou hast saved Rome, but lost thy son!" So he drew off his army and returned to the Volscians, who, as he had foreseen, put him to death. That pagan, who respected and feared his mother, puts many Christians to shame.

The Example of Peter Sigmaier

Many children exhibit an heroic love for their parents. Peter Sigmaier, the landlord of a hostelry in the Tyrol, was one of the bravest patriots who fought under Andreas Hofer's command in 1809. When the French obtained the mastery in that land, they treated all the Tyrolese patriots who had distinguished themselves by their brave and determined resistance to the invaders, with the utmost cruelty. Peter Sigmaier was sentenced to death by the French general Broussier; he was to be shot, but he saved himself by flight. In order to gain possession of his person the French general had his aged father arrested, commanding that he should be executed in his son's stead, provided the latter did not give himself up within the space of three days. When Peter heard of this barbarous behest, he instantly surrendered himself to the enemy, although he had a wife

and children dependent on him. General Broussier caused the hero to be shot, although his wife and children entreated him on their knees to have pity upon them. He was executed on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, 1810, and met his death with unflinching fortitude.

Q. What are we commanded by the fourth commandment?

A. We are commanded by the fourth commandment to honor, love, and obey our parents in all that is not sin.

Children may sometimes Teach their Parents

Clement Hofbauer, who is called the apostle of Vienna, once found out that one of his boys ate meat on Friday. He called his attention to the law of the Church, and forbade him to do so in future. The boy went home, and when Friday came, he refused to eat the meat set before him, reminding his parents of the rule, and telling them what Hofbauer had said to him. His father was very angry, and told him if he did not eat what was provided for him, he might go without his dinner; and he drove the boy away from the table. Afterward his mother took him aside and gave him bread and cheese without his father's knowledge. But the boy would not eat it, because his father had said he was to have nothing. Then the mother went to her husband and said: "Do be reasonable; do not let the poor child go hungry." When the man heard that the boy would not eat anything unless he revoked his

prohibition, he was touched by his obedience, and told him he might have as much as he liked. From that time forth meat was never seen on the table in that house on Friday. See what influence good children may have over their parents.

The Son who Liberated his Father from Slavery

In bygone times a man and his son were both employed in a large mercantile house. The father was a traveler, the son a clerk. One day when the father was absent, bad news was received; the ship on which he had taken his passage while traveling for the firm, had been attacked by pirates, and crew and passengers were taken captive. Not long after, the son heard that his father was in Turkey, having been sold as a slave. Immediately he resolved to spare no exertion to obtain his release. He saved all the money he possibly could, sold his best suit of clothes, and begged some philanthropic persons to help him to collect a sufficient sum for his father's ransom. When he had raised a considerable amount, he asked his employers for leave of absence and went to the place where he had been told that his father was. He found him as a slave in the service of a wealthy Turk, and asked to be allowed to purchase his freedom. But the amount the Turk demanded as ransom was enormous, far beyond what the young man could pay. Accordingly he said: "Take me in my father's place. I am young and can do more work than an old man like him." The master then sent for the young man's father, and acquainted him

with the proposal. The father embraced his son with tears; he would not, however, consent that he should ransom him in that fashion. Yet the son insisted; "Go, father," he said, "take the money I collected for your ransom to pay for your journey home; I am quite willing to wear your chains, and even to die in slavery, if you go free." The Turk was so touched by this display of filial affection that he commended the young man in the highest terms and gave the father his liberty without taking any money for his release. God's blessing attends those who observe the fourth commandment.

The Wooden Plate

Undutiful children are often punished by the bad behavior of their own offspring. A peasant was once making a wooden platter for amusement in his leisure time. His little boy who stood watching him, asked what he was making. The man replied: "Your grandfather often breaks his plate at dinner, so I am cutting a wooden one for him." "Make a good strong one, father," the boy rejoined; "then I can give it to you to eat off when you are old." The father was so struck by this remark that he laid his work aside; he saw that almighty God would pay him back in his own coin.

Q. Are we bound to honor and obey others than our parents?

A. We are also bound to honor and obey our bishops, pastors, magistrates, teachers, and other lawful superiors.

The Helmsman

Conscientious rulers of the Church and of the State have a life of care and solicitude. A party of distinguished persons went for a cruise at sea. Among them was a young man who had never been on the sea before. He observed attentively all that went on around him, and was amazed at the quickness and industry of the sailors. There was only one of the crew with whom he found fault; that was the helmsman. "The man," he remarked, "who stands in the hind part of the vessel does no work at all; he only moves his hands occasionally." All who were present laughed at this remark. An old gentleman, however, made answer: "The man at the helm has the most severe and responsible task; he must be constantly on the lookout, and must observe the compass, and never, whatever the weather may be, quit his post. The slightest mistake on his part might cost us all our lives. Our safety depends on his watchfulness and attention." Soon after, a large vessel hove in sight bearing down upon the yacht, and a collision appeared inevitable. Yet the helmsman did not lose his presence of mind, but turned the rudder so promptly and so wisely that the danger that seemed imminent was averted. "See," the old gentleman presently went on, "our rulers are just like this helmsman. The head of the government holds the helm of the State; it may be thought that he has an easy life, free from care, but this is by no means the case. The guidance of public affairs costs him much solicitude and anxiety, for

he is aware that a single error on his part might cause misfortune to millions." — This truth applies to the supreme pontiff as well as to secular rulers.

The Emperor Francis I of Austria

The monarch is the father of his people. In the year 1832 Europe was ravaged by the cholera. When this epidemic broke out in Vienna the emperor, Francis I, was advised by his most faithful counselors to leave Vienna and betake himself to Salzburg, until the plague was at an end. "Will there be room enough in Salzburg for all my children?" the emperor inquired of his anxious advisers. "Certainly, your Majesty," one of them replied; "there is plenty of accommodation there for all the members of your imperial family." "Is there really room for *all* my children?" the monarch again inquired, adding, as he waved his hand toward the windows of the palace, "Look at all the multitudes out there; they, and thousands more, are my children. Ought their father to forsake them at the very time that they are in danger? No; my beloved Viennese have hitherto shared my joys and shared my sorrows, therefore I will not abandon them in the season of affliction."

A Loyal Peasant

Patriotism (love of one's country) is a virtue every Christian ought to possess. At one time, when a hostile army was advancing upon Vienna, the enemy seized an Austrian peasant and ordered him to act as their guide. This the peasant stoutly

refused to do. Then the general of the invading force offered him a large sum of money, but he persisted in his refusal. Finally the general had recourse to threats. "If you will not show us the way," he said, "I will order you to be shot immediately." "Very good, sir," the countryman replied; "in that case I shall die as an honest, upright subject of my emperor, and not become a dastardly traitor to my country." When the general heard this speech he shook the man by the hand, saying: "Go back home, my gallant fellow. We will find our way without a guide."

An Englishman's Grave

When Henry VIII began to persecute the Catholics in England, many persons took refuge on the Continent. Among the latter was a man named Robert Peckham, who went to Rome, and died there shortly after. He was buried in the porch of the church of St. Gregory, where a tablet to his memory may yet be seen, bearing this inscription: "Here lies Robert Peckham, an English Catholic, who, after England's breach with the Holy See, left his country because he could not live there without the Faith, and who, having come to Rome, died there because he could not live away from his native land."

Andreas Hofer

Every subject owes fidelity and assistance to his sovereign. When, in the year 1809, the Emperor Napoleon marched his forces into the Tyrol with

the intention of detaching that land from the Austrian dominions and subjugating it to his own sway, all Tyrol was in a ferment. The motto of the Tyrolese had ever been this: "For God, our emperor, and our country." Andreas Hofer, the landlord of a hostelry, made himself especially prominent; he it was who published a proclamation calling on his fellow-countrymen to take up arms to withstand the invader. Everywhere bells were rung and bonfires lighted to assemble the men; at a little distance from Innsbruck the band of patriots engaged the French in battle, and after an obstinate fight forced them to give way. Eight thousand French soldiers were taken prisoners; Andreas Hofer entered Innsbruck in triumph as a victor. But the French could not rest without making good the check they had received; another and larger army invaded the land. They were encountered by the Tyrolese, again led by the valiant Hofer, at the spot which witnessed their former defeat, and again they were driven back and forced to retreat. The bells pealed forth a merry chime, and *feux-de-joie* celebrated the fresh victory; yet a third time the French entered the Tyrol, on this occasion with an army fifty thousand strong, under the command of Marshal Lefebre, subsequently to the defeat of the Austrians in the bloody battle of Wagram. Hofer awaited the advent of the foe in a narrow mountain pass. As soon as the troops entered the ravine the Tyrolese, at a given signal, rolled down upon them huge masses of rock and trunks of trees, crushing them by hundreds. To

the French it appeared as if the rocks themselves were falling on them; the survivors were compelled to surrender to the Tyrolese, who came down from the heights with weapons in their hands. Even women took part in this conflict. Lefebre escaped with a handful of men; he is said to have exclaimed: "O cursed land, never did I meet with the like!" Thus the land was freed for the third time from the presence of the invader. But, alas! sad tidings reached the brave patriots; the Emperor Francis made a treaty with Napoleon, and the Tyrol was ceded to him. Moreover, a message was sent from the Emperor Francis to his loyal subjects, to the effect that he desired them to submit to the foreign yoke. Hofer committed a grave error. Misled by false reports, instead of submitting to the conqueror, he once more appealed to his fellow-patriots to rise up against him. This act cost him dear. Napoleon offered a reward of 10,000 gulden to any one who should give information which should lead to Hofer's capture. A mean-spirited wretch betrayed his hiding-place, — a cow-keeper's hut, high up in the mountains. Napoleon sent a company of soldiers to arrest him; they surrounded the hut where he had taken refuge. Hofer came out and said: "Do what you will with me, but spare my wife and my children." He was handcuffed and taken in chains to the fortress of Mantua, where he was shot. He met death like a hero. The first volley did not touch him. "What!" he exclaimed, "cannot you take better aim than that?" His last words as he fell were: "Long live our good Emperor Francis."

The Gift of a Maiden's Hair

At the outbreak of the war with Napoleon I, in 1813, German patriots made great sacrifices for the equipment of an army. About this time a large company of guests were assembled in one of the principal hotels in Berlin, where printed appeals, soliciting donations to the fund for national defense, were placed on the tables. Many of the guests were ladies; of these, some contributed sums of money, others gave such portions of their jewelry as they could spare. Now among them there was one lady who was very poor, and had nothing that she could give. She thought, what could she do? Suddenly an idea struck her; she hastened to the hair-dresser's and had all her hair, which was long and remarkably beautiful, cut off. For this the man gave her 15 marks. When the collector of the donations heard this incident, he bought the hair, and had it made into rings with a gold setting, which he offered for sale. By this means he realized the sum of 4000 marks (nearly $1000), for every one was desirous of possessing a souvenir of the generous young German lady who made so great a sacrifice for the fatherland.

Q. Have parents and superiors any duties towards those who are under their charge?

A. It is the duty of parents and superiors to take good care of all under their charge and give them proper direction and example.

The Empress Maria Theresa's Visit to the Military School

A pleasing instance of filial piety was given by a young Dalmatian, a pupil in the military academy in Vienna. On one occasion the Empress Maria Theresa paid a visit to that institution and asked the director who was his best pupil. He immediately named the young man in question, whose name was Virkassovitch. The empress said she would like to see his skill in fencing, and he went through a mock combat with the foils in excellent style. The royal lady praised his cleverness and rewarded him with a gift of 12 ducats. The next time she honored the academy with a visit, she called for the young Dalmatian, and asked him what he had done with the money she gave him. He colored, and answered timidly that he had sent it to his aged father. The empress, observing that the tears came into his eyes as he spoke, made some further inquiries as to the standing and health of his father. When she heard that he had been an officer in the army, and now lived in poverty on a scanty pension that had been granted to him, she made the young man write a letter at her dictation, informing his father that by order of her imperial Majesty, a yearly pension of 200 gulden (about $100) should be paid him until his death. Moreover, she gave the son a present of 24 ducats. This well-principled young man had a prosperous career; through his skill in military tactics and his courage he rose

from one grade to another, until he reached the rank of lieutenant-general. Hence it will be seen that God richly rewards what children do for their parents.

The Man who Paid his Debts and Put his Money out to Interest

There was once an industrious cabinetmaker who had plenty of work, and consequently earned a great deal. Yet he always dressed very plainly and lived very simply. One day a neighbor asked him what he did with all his money. He replied: "With part, I pay my debts, and the rest I put out to interest." The other asked him to explain what he meant. "I mean what I say," the cabinetmaker rejoined. "I give back to my aged parents the money they spent on me when I was young; and what I now expend on my children I look upon as capital which I hope to have repaid with interest in my old age." What our parents do for us is a debt which we are bound to repay.

Servile Work on Sunday

Children are only bound to obey their parents in things that are lawful. One Sunday a farmer told his son to go to work in the fields. The son answered: "Father, to-day is Sunday; I must not break the third commandment, and offend against God." The father rejoined: "Those commandments are only meant for children. You are grown up, they are nothing for you." "If that is so," the young man replied, "I need not obey you any

longer; if the third commandment is not binding on me any more, neither is the fourth." The farmer could make no answer; he went away feeling he had made a fool of himself. If parents and superiors undermine reverence for God's authority, they saw off the branch on which they themselves sit.

Cornelia's Jewels

Good works are what should be really prized, not outward adornments and distinctions. A noble Roman lady named Cornelia, who had trained her children with the utmost care, one day received a visit from a friend who wore a great number of gold ornaments and jewels, and prided herself not a little on those ornaments. She asked Cornelia, who was dressed in the simplest manner, to show her her jewelry. Cornelia sent for her children and presented them to her visitor, saying with a smile: "These are my jewels." That Roman lady was quite right, for to bring children up well is a meritorious work, well-pleasing to God, who regards not the outward adornment of any man.

Q. What is forbidden by the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment forbids all disobedience, contempt, and stubbornness towards our parents or lawful superiors.

The Pope and his Mother

Pope Benedict XI was raised to the papal chair in 1303. His mother was still living, and in Rome, where she, a poor widow, supported herself by wash-

ing. Seeing how many persons flocked to offer their congratulations to the newly elected pontiff, his mother must needs do the same. So she bought a grand dress and repaired to the papal palace with all the airs of a great lady. When she presented herself before the pope, he stepped back, saying: "That is not my mother. My mother is not a lady of rank; she is a poor washerwoman." She, consequently, was obliged to withdraw, and resume the simple, shabby clothes that became her humble station. When she again entered the pope's presence, he welcomed her most cordially, and provided for her during the remainder of her days. He was not ashamed of the low estate of his parents. And yet how often we meet with persons of humble rank who are ashamed of their parents because they are poor. Who can do otherwise than despise such arrogant and ungrateful children?

Ziethen's Conduct when a Page

Ziethen, the famous general of Hussars, was in his youth a page at the court of Frederic I, king of Prussia. Part of his duty was to keep guard for several consecutive nights in the king's antechamber. He undertook this office in the place of other pages for the sake of emolument; he wanted to earn money for the maintenance of his mother. One night the king could not sleep, and wanted a book brought to him. He rang for the page several times, but no one came. Thereupon the king got up and went into the antechamber to see why the bell was not answered. He found Ziethen fast asleep with a

letter half written to his mother. In it he told her how much these self-imposed vigils cost him, adding that he had thereby earned ten thalers (between seven and eight dollars) which he was sending her. The king read the letter, and was greatly touched by the young man's filial piety. He returned to his room, and taking two rolls of louis d'or, put one in each of the sleeper's pockets. Far from punishing him for sleeping, on the following day the king gave him a commission in the army. In course of time, Ziethen rose to a high rank, and distinguished himself by his military exploits. Good children get on well.

A Bishop's Instruction

Our parents are our greatest benefactors. The Prince-Bishop Grüber of Salzburg was very fond of children, and took great interest in their training. One day, when he was examining a class of children in religion in the Tyrol, he spoke to them about the duty they owed to their parents. In order to make them understand in some measure the gratitude due to those who had brought them up, he asked one of the girls this question: "Do you know how much money you have already cost your parents?" The girl, though she was sharp at reckoning, was at a loss for an answer. Then the bishop said: "Let us count it up together. We will suppose that the cost of your food amounts to 10 cents a day." The child interposed, "More than that." "Never mind," the bishop went on, "let us say 10 cents a day. That would be $3 a month, and $36

a year. How old are you? Ten years. Well, then, your parents have had to spend $360 for your keep. To that we must add the outlay for clothes, washing, medicine, schooling, etc., nor must we omit to mention your parents' daily care and labor in providing for you, in bringing you up well and training you. All that money will not pay for. Children ought to endeavor to discharge this debt by obedience and dutiful behavior." This representation by the bishop of their indebtedness to their parents had a salutary influence on the children. It had never occurred to them to think of the benefits their parents had conferred on them and the gratitude they owed them. After this instruction if any child was untractable, it was enough for her mother to say: "How much have you cost me? Is this your manner of repayment?"

Q. What is the fifth commandment?
A. The fifth commandment is: Thou shalt not kill.

Andreas Hofer Saves his Enemies

It is the duty of a Christian to return good for evil. Andreas Hofer, the hero of the Tyrol, affords a striking example of magnanimity. In the time of war with France, through treachery, he fell into the hands of the French, who conducted him as a prisoner to Mantua, where he was eventually shot. On the way he and his escort took up their quarters for the night in the outbuilding of a farm. A guard of soldiers kept watch in the room where the prisoner

slept. Suddenly he awoke, and perceived the fumes of charcoal. Almost suffocated himself, he sprang out of bed, and found his guard lying insensible on the floor. He could, with the greatest facility, have saved himself and regained liberty by flight; but instead of that he went into the adjoining apartment and roused the other soldiers, bidding them come to the rescue of their comrades. This magnanimous act on Hofer's part was all the more creditable to him, because the French soldiers had maltreated him cruelly.

Gustavus Adolphus and the Officers

Some of the ablest rulers and generals have been opposed to duelling. King Gustavus Adolphus strictly forbade the practice of duelling in his army under pain of death. At one time two officers of high standing who had quarreled, asked an audience of the king and begged his permission to settle their differences by fighting a duel. The king was extremely angry, but he concealed his displeasure, saying: "I will myself be an eyewitness of your bravery. Let me know when the place and hour are fixed." When the required information had been brought to the king, he did actually repair to the spot, bringing with him a squadron of soldiers, who formed a circle round the duelists. "Now," he said to the combatants, "draw your swords and go on fighting until one is killed, and I will have the survivor instantly beheaded." This speech brought the officers to reason; they sheathed their swords and at the royal command shook hands and promised to be good friends.

The Delayed Despatch

God repays murderers in their own coin. The following occurrence took place some years ago in Spain. Two scoundrels attacked a traveler who had lost his way in a blinding snowstorm, robbed, and murdered him. They were brought to justice and condemned to death. At the last moment, however, they were pardoned by the queen. The telegram announcing the mitigation of their sentence did not, however, arrive until two hours after their execution. Heavy snowdrifts had impeded the telegraphic communication, thus the transmission of the message was delayed. As they did to others, so were they punished; the snowdrifts cost them their life.

"The Sun will soon Set"

If we have wronged any one in our anger, we ought to repair our fault as soon as possible. St. John the Almoner, Patriarch of Alexandria, exerted himself to the utmost to prevent the usual assistance given to the poor being discontinued. On appealing to the governor he met with scant courtesy; in fact, he was abused in a very rude manner. In the evening of the same day the saint sent this message to the governor: "The sun will soon set." By this he meant: follow the exhortation of the Apostle when he says: "Let not the sun go down upon your anger," — that is, be reconciled before the day is done. The governor understood this kind message; he sent an apology to the patriarch and complied with his request.

A Royal Apology

It is related of King James II of England that one day he was looking for an important document, but could not find it anywhere. He got very angry and accused his valet of having lost it. When the man asserted his innocence, the king so far forgot himself in his anger as to strike him. Shortly after, a gentleman came in bringing the manuscript of which the king had been in search. He immediately recalled the servant to his presence, and made an ample apology for his false accusation, saying: "I will not let you go until you say you have forgiven me." He also made the man a handsome present, and treated him with marked favor ever after. If we have wronged any one we ought to make good our fault without delay.

Q. What are we commanded by the fifth commandment?

A. We are commanded by the fifth commandment to live in peace and union with our neighbor, to respect his rights, to seek his spiritual and bodily welfare, and to take proper care of our own life and health.

The Thankless Son and the Adder

Ungrateful people often meet with a bad end. Prudent parents keep in mind the homely saying: Do not undress before you are going to bed; that is to say, do not give your children the property you need for your own maintenance before your death. There was once a mother who, in foolish fondness for her son, was so rash as to make over to him her whole fortune — a large one — on the condition that

he should provide for her until her death. But no sooner had the thankless son got the money into his own hands than he turned his mother out of doors. A solicitor took up the unhappy woman's case, and brought an action against the son, in the hope that he might be compelled by law to fulfill his agreement. At this the son was so furious that he swore to be revenged upon the solicitor. This was no empty threat; one evening when the solicitor had gone out, he went to his house, carrying a long box in which was a venomous snake. Unfastening the door gently, he stepped in, and opening the box, let out the reptile. But before he could get away it turned on him, bit him severely, and wound its long coils round his body. Screaming with terror, the man staggered down the steps, endeavoring to free himself from the snake. All his efforts were in vain; by the time he reached the street it held him more tightly in its embrace. He fell to the ground and quickly expired. The solicitor, who met, but did not recognize the man as he hurried away from the entrance, found the empty box by the drawing-room door. When he heard what had happened he understood all, and gave God thanks for having preserved him and his family from a dire calamity. Here we see the truth of another proverb, which says: He who digs a pit for another often falls into it himself.

The Poor Youth with Sound Limbs

Health is more precious than money. A youth who was quite destitute of this world's goods happened to meet his former schoolmaster. The latter

greeted him kindly, and asked how he was getting on. "Not at all well," the young man replied, "I am terribly poor." His teacher shook his head, saying: "You are not really very poor; you are strong and well." Taking him by the hand, he added: "Would you part with this hand for five hundred dollars?" "I would not part with it for any money," was the answer. The schoolmaster then asked whether he would, perhaps, part with his two sound and sturdy feet for a like sum, and again the youth replied with an emphatic negative. The schoolmaster continued: "Perchance you would part with your good eyes, or your ears, if all the king's treasures were offered you?" "On no account would I do so," the youth answered. "Then," his teacher rejoined, "do not complain of being poor, since you possess treasures which no money can purchase." True indeed are the words of Holy Scripture, "Health is better than immense revenues" (Ecclus. xxx. 15).

A River Washes away the Earth on one Side, and Casts it up on the Other

God gives to peacemakers a hundred-fold more than what they lose for the sake of peace. Catherine Emmerich relates in her visions this incident out of Our Lord's life. In Dothaim the Redeemer taught the reapers during the day, and at night repaired to the house of a peasant to sleep. The man with whom He sojourned complained to Him of his neighbor, who had cheated him out of a considerable portion of the land belonging to him. Jesus asked him if he had sufficient for the maintenance of himself and

his family. The man replied in the affirmative. Then Christ said to him: "Give your neighbor yet more, in order to satisfy his craving for earthly possessions. All that you willingly relinquish here on earth for the sake of peace will be rendered to you a hundred-fold in My kingdom. It is the same as with a river; it washes away the earth on one of its banks, and casts it up on the other."

The Bundle of Sticks

Unity is strength. A king wished to give his seven sons a lesson in the necessity of union. In order to do this, he first gave a stick to each one singly, and told them to see if they could succeed in breaking it. Each one of the seven broke his stick with the greatest ease. Thereupon the king took seven other sticks of the same thickness as the former ones, and bade his sons tie them all together. When this was done, he gave the bundle to one after another to see if they could break it. Not one of them was able to accomplish this. Then their father said to them: "See, my sons, it will be just the same with you as with these sticks. As long as you hold together, and act in concert, no one will find it an easy task to conquer you. But if once the bond that unites you is severed, and you are separated, if discord and dissension creep in, you are undone; your fate will be like that of these sticks which you see lying broken on the ground." — Men of good will should join together for good works; by united action they will be able to accomplish great things. Union is strength.

Q. What is forbidden by the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment forbids all willful murder, fighting, anger, hatred, revenge, and bad example.

The Splinter of Wood

Murder committed most secretly is often brought unexpectedly to light. Murder is a crime which cries to Heaven for vengeance; wherefore God frequently ordains that the murderer shall be discovered by means of the merest trifle. The following incident is an illustration of this truth. A postman was once found murdered in the open country, the money he had on his person having been stolen. The magistrate went himself with the police to examine the body. Nothing was found on the spot which could serve to identify the murderer; only a splinter off a stick, stained with blood, lay on the ground. Of this the magistrate at once took possession. The next morning, when he entered the police court, his eye happened to fall upon a stout, knobbed stick leaning against the wall by the door, belonging to one of the officials. It struck him that there was a white place in the stick where a piece had recently been broken off. On closer examination, he found that the fragment he had picked up on the previous day exactly fitted into the place. Immediately he ordered the owner of the stick to be arrested. When brought into court to be examined, however, the man persisted in obstinately denying all knowledge of the murder. But when the piece of wood found on the scene of the crime was fitted into the stick before his eyes, he grew white to the lips, and confessed his

guilt. Every one was surprised that so insignificant a circumstance should have led to the discovery of a crime committed in secret; and all saw in this occurrence the finger of God, who would not allow so heinous a sin to go unpunished.

The Slave Ship

For many years England and Germany had been endeavoring to suppress the slave trade on the east coast of Africa by pursuing the slave ships with men-of-war. On one occasion a slave trader, carrying a large cargo of slaves, found his vessel hotly pursued by a war ship. Thereupon, he had all the unfortu nate slaves, about five hundred in all, thrown into the sea, standing himself on the deck, to make sure that they were all swallowed up in the waves. When the slave ship was overtaken by the war ship, boarded, and searched, the owner stood by with a scornful smile; he imagined that no trace of his crime could be detected. But presently he changed color, for in a remote part of the vessel a dozen negroes were discovered. They had been overlooked, and they now became his accusers. The British made short work of the slave dealer; they hung him up to one of the yardarms of his ship. The negroes were conveyed back to their own country, and there set at liberty. This incident shows how unexpectedly acts of violence are brought to light.

A Gulden Earned by Placidity

We should find it easier to remain calm if we thought of the recompense promised to the meek.

A gentleman's servant could not abstain from outbursts of anger despite all the admonitions and corrections he received from his master. Finally the latter promised to give him a gulden every evening, if he should have kept his temper completely during the day. This time the man kept himself well in hand, although his fellow-servants tried hard to irritate him. Not a single angry word escaped his lips. When evening came he presented himself before his master in all the pride of victory, and asked for the promised gulden. His master gave it to him and said: "So you were able to conquer yourself for the sake of a miserable piece of money; how much better to think of the infinitely greater, the eternal reward which God will give hereafter to those who gain the victory over themselves." This serious advice was not without effect. From that time forth the servant learned completely to master his temper.

The Three Brothers and the Diamond

We must not revenge ourselves on our enemy, but rather do good to him. A wealthy man once divided his property between his three sons. When each had received his portion, there remained one diamond of great value. The father then said: "I will give this jewel to whichever of you shall perform the noblest action. Go into the world and see what you can do." The three brothers went each his way, intent on doing something that was good and praise worthy. After three months they returned to their father. The eldest said to him: "A stranger confided to my care the whole of his property, and I

restored it to him intact." His father answered: "You only did your duty, my son." Then the second came forward and said: "Father, I saw a child fall into the river, and I plunged in and rescued it." "That was a deed deserving of praise," his father replied, "but in nowise extraordinary." The third son then spoke: "In the course of my travels I climbed a mountain, and saw my deadliest enemy asleep on the brink of a precipice. Nothing would have been easier than to throw him down. I did not do that; on the contrary, I woke him and warned him of his danger: thus I saved his life." Hearing this the father looked at his son with a kindly smile: "The diamond is yours," he said. "That is true nobility, to do good to those who hate you."

Q. What is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is: Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Refusal of an Artist to Carve a Statue of Venus

Very praiseworthy was the conduct of an Italian sculptor, whom King Victor Emmanuel requested to carve for him a beautiful statue of Venus, the heathen goddess of love. The artist not only declined the commission, but sent word to the king that not all the gold and silver in Italy would suffice to induce him to lay hand to the creation of such a statue. He was too good a Christian to lend his talent to the glorification of paganism and immodesty.

Q. What are we commanded by the sixth commandment?

A. We are commanded by the sixth commandment to be pure in thought and modest in all our looks, words, and actions.

Beating Time to a Melody

Some gentlemen, sitting round a table in a restaurant, were indulging in filthy conversation. Close to them was a workingman, who kept making a nasty noise in his throat. After a time one of the gentlemen turned to him, and said: "Look here, do you not know what ordinary manners require?" "That I do," the man answered. "I am doing the right thing in beating time to your music." The gentleman saw the reproof, and left off talking in an unseemly way; the man also ceased making a disgusting noise.

Q. What is forbidden by the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment forbids all unchaste freedom with another's wife or husband; also all immodesty with ourselves or others in looks, dress, words, or actions.

The Lord's Prayer

Improper conversation, indecent pictures, immoral books, are not to be tolerated. In one of the compartments of a railway coach a Franciscan monk was seated, together with several other persons. Out of disrespect for the religious, and a wish to annoy him, some young men began to talk in a very objectionable manner. The monk spoke to them about the

impropriety of conversing in so unseemly a manner in the presence of respectable people. The young fellows laughed, and said they were at liberty to say what they chose. "If so," the monk rejoined, "I, too, am at liberty to say what I please." They replied that of course he was. Thereupon he crossed himself and solemnly recited aloud an Our Father. Thus he put an end to the unseemly conversation.

Q. Does the sixth commandment forbid the reading of bad and immodest books and newspapers?

A. The sixth commandment does forbid the reading of bad and immodest books and newspapers.

Nude Figures

The distinguished prelate, Cardinal Bellarmine, once had occasion to visit a certain prince. In the antechamber, where he was kept waiting for a long time, there were several paintings of nude figures, which offended against one's sense of modesty and propriety. The bishop was very indignant at this display of indecorous pictures; but when admitted to the great man's presence, he did not allow his displeasure to be perceived. Only when his interview was ended, he said: "One thing more; may I venture to recommend some individuals to your Highness, who are destitute of the most necessary garments?" The prince expressed his willingness to comply with the cardinal's request on behalf of the needy poor. As he took his leave in the antechamber, the cardinal turned, and indicating with his hand the objectionable pictures on the wall: "Those are the poor

creatures of whom I spoke," he said, "who are in need of clothing; they must have suffered greatly from the cold in winter." The prince smiled, and took the saintly prelate's reproof in good part; the paintings in question were removed from the walls of the antechamber.

An Objectionable Print is Torn up

In the window of a bookseller's shop in a certain town an indecent picture was exposed for sale. After it had been there for several days, a gentleman who passed by every day with his children went into the shop and asked what the picture cost. The bookseller took it out of his window, and brought it to the gentleman, expatiating on its merits as a work of art. He named the price, which was instantly produced, and the purchaser of the picture, taking it from him, tore it into fragments then and there, saying: "Now I shall no longer have occasion to blush with shame whenever I go by your shop with my children."

LESSON THIRTY-FOURTH

FROM THE SEVENTH TO THE END OF THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

Q. What is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is: Thou shalt not steal.

A Godless Landlord

Irreligious people cannot be trusted. A French senator (Renaud by name), on arriving in Paris, took rooms in a large hotel for several months. He was required to pay the rent for one month in advance, the amount was 150 francs ($30). The proprietor of the hotel, on taking the money, asked the gentleman if he wished for a receipt. M. Renaud replied: "It is not necessary when both parties believe in God." "What!" the hotel keeper rejoined, with a scornful gesture, "do you actually believe in the existence of a God?" "Of course I do," the senator answered; "do not you?" "O dear no," the man replied, "I do not believe in God." "In that case I must certainly ask you for a formal receipt," the senator instantly said. He was quite right; godless people cannot be trusted.

The Horse Stealer at the Cattle Market

A farmer had his best horse stolen out of his stables one night. Being unable to trace the thief, he went

shortly after to the horse market in a neighboring town, to purchase another horse. To his astonishment he saw his own horse there. He seized the halter, exclaiming: "The beast is mine! It was stolen from me only three days ago." The man who was offering the horse for sale, said: "Indeed, you are quite mistaken, sir. This animal has been in my possession for the last twelve months." The countryman instantly clapped his hands over the horse's eyes. "If he has been in your possession a year," he cried, "you can tell me of which eye he is blind." "The left eye," the man answered. "You are out there!" the farmer replied; "he is not blind of the left eye." "No, no, it was the right eye I meant to say." Then the farmer took his hands away from the horse's eyes, and said: "Now you cannot deny that the horse is mine, stolen from me. Look, all of you," turning to the bystanders, "the nag is no more blind than I am." All who were present laughed, and applauded his wit. The thief was obliged to give up the horse, and go to prison, that same day.

The Fraudulent Banker

A wealthy banker squandered the money intrusted to him and was declared a bankrupt. Three of his creditors, who had deposited large sums in his bank, happening to meet one another, mutually complained of the loss they had sustained. One said sadly: "That rogue has robbed me of $20,000." Another said: "I have lost $30,000 through his knavery." The third said: "I have only lost $5." The others stared at him in astonishment. "How is that

possible," they asked, "you always had such a large balance at the bank?" The man replied: "I drew my money out in good time." Both the others inquired in one breath whatever had induced him to do that. He explained his conduct as follows: "From reading some of his speeches in the newspaper, I discovered that he had renounced all belief in God, and scoffed at all the ordinances of religion. Then I said to myself: 'My money is not safe with a man like that, for a godless man is capable of any false dealing,' and forthwith I drew my money out of his bank."

Money Sewn up in a Dress

A servant in Berlin, who had been for some time out of a situation, was reduced to such poverty that she was compelled to part with some of her clothes. Among other things she sold to a poor widow a warm winter dress, which had belonged to her mother. After a few days had passed the widow brought back the dress, saying: "I am poor and have three children dependent on me, but I am an honest woman. Here is your dress. Will you please return the two dollars I paid you for it?" The servant did not understand what the widow meant; she said she had not two dollars to give her. Then the woman told her that sewn up in the dress she had found a bank note for fifty dollars, with a note the mother had written to say that she had saved this sum, and she bequeathed it to her daughter, that she might never be in want of a little money. The poor girl was delighted and gratefully thanked her neigh-

bor, who, although she had a hard struggle to maintain herself and her children, was conscientious and honest, and worthy of the greatest respect. Would that there were more like her!

Q. What are we commanded by the seventh commandment?

A. By the seventh commandment we are commanded to give to all men what belongs to them and to respect their property.

Dionysius and the Two Friends

How lovely are true friendships, — the friendship of persons who are attracted to one another by similarity of noble sentiments. A beautiful instance of true friendship is handed down to us from ancient times. Damon and Pythias were firm friends. One of them was sentenced to death by Dionysius, the tyrant. He asked and obtained permission to set his house in order before the execution of the sentence. During his absence, his friend remained in custody as a hostage, ready to suffer death in his stead should he not reappear at the appointed time. The day fixed for the execution drew near, — nay, the time was almost up, and the condemned had not returned to release his friend. Yet the latter never wavered in his conviction that he would erelong appear. So he did; and Dionysius so much admired the faithful friendship of these two men, that he revoked the sentence of death. One real friendship suffices for a lifetime, and between such friends explanations are never necessary.

The Usurer in Prison

Peter the Cruel, king of Castile, was, as his soubriquet implies, not a man who allowed any one to trifle with him. One day he was informed that a certain miser enriched himself by usury, and had been the ruin of many persons. As soon as he had assured himself of the truth of this report, the king had the man put into prison, and orders given to the warden to supply him with nothing but bread and water, and for that to charge an exorbitant price. When the prisoner asked for something to satisfy the cravings of appetite, the governor of the prison mentioned what the charge would be. At this the miser cried out that he would rather starve than pay so much for food. But when the pangs of hunger and thirst made themselves sharply felt, he again begged for something to eat and drink. Thereupon double the former price was demanded. There was no alternative; he must either pay the money or die of hunger. Only a small quantity of bread and water was brought to him, so that he soon had to ask for more. The same farce was acted over again. In the space of a few days the usurer's unjust gains had diminished considerably. Then the king caused him to be brought into his presence, and said to him: "Now you see how difficult it is for the poor to procure the necessaries of life. Be more lenient toward them, and give up lending money at such a high rate of interest. If you promise me that you will no longer practice usury, I will let you go free; but if I hear that you have relapsed into your former evil

ways, I will have you executed." The usurer promised to amend, and kept his word.

The Two Little Chaps from Town

We should endeavor to check immoderate curiosity. Two boys who lived in a town went out into the country and lost their way in a wood. Presently they came to an inn, and as it was already dark, they begged the landlord to let them stay the night there. The host felt for the children, and showed them a room where they might sleep. During the night they heard voices in the room adjoining, and crept to the door to listen to what was said. They distinctly heard the host say to his wife, "We shall want plenty of hot water to-morrow, wife; see that we have it, for I am going to kill the two little chaps from the town." The boys, who had read a book about cannibals, were terribly frightened, for they thought the landlord's speech referred to them. They got out of the window and in their terror tried to escape from the premises; but they found the yard gate locked, and the wall was too high for them to climb over, so they hid themselves behind the pigsty, where the pigs were fast asleep, with the intention of slipping out unperceived as soon as the yard gate was opened in the morning. But the landlord got up very early, and came out to the pigsty with a large butcher's knife in his hand. As soon as the boys saw him, they began to cry aloud for mercy, and beg him on their knees to spare their lives. The man laughed at the little fellows, and asked why they had crept behind the pigsty. They

replied that the night before they overheard him say that he intended to slaughter them both in the morning. Then the landlord laughed outright: "O you silly children!" he exclaimed. "It was not you that I meant. I was only joking when I spoke of the two little pigs I bought in the town as the little chaps from the town." He then proceeded to kill the two pigs. This anecdote shows us the evil consequences of curiosity. He who is governed by curiosity causes himself unnecessary anxiety, is prone to suspect others, and often gets into great annoyances with them.

Q. What is forbidden by the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment forbids all unjust taking or keeping what belongs to another.

The Death of Three Robbers

False friends are more to be feared than open enemies. The friendship formed between bad men for an evil end is generally a false friendship. Three men agreed together once upon a time to rob travelers. One day they robbed and murdered a merchant, who had a large sum of money on his person. Directly after this crime was committed, one of the number, the youngest, was sent into the neighboring town to buy provisions. When he was gone, the other two said to one another: "Why should we give a third of our booty to that fellow? As soon as he comes back we will put him out of the way and divide the money between ourselves." Meanwhile the young man was saying to

himself: "If I could get all of that money for myself, I should be a rich man, and could give up this work of thieving. I will put poison in the victuals that I am going to purchase; then I can take all for myself." Accordingly, he poisoned the meat he was carrying to his comrades. But no sooner did he rejoin them than they stabbed him to the heart. They then consumed the food he had brought, and died in terrible agony. Such is too often the end of friendships formed by the wicked. False friends bring about their own perdition as well as that of others.

A Specific for Toothache

A swindler is one who endeavors by fraudulent means to cheat his neighbor. One Sunday evening a well-dressed man entered a restaurant and ordered supper. As soon as he had put the first morsel into his mouth, he cried out, and put his napkin to his cheek. The landlord went up to him and asked what was the matter. He replied that, for the last fortnight, he had been a martyr to toothache. All the guests condoled with him as he sat rocking himself in apparent agony. Presently a traveler entered, carrying a small handbag; he sat down and called for a glass of brandy. When he heard that the gentleman was suffering so severely from toothache, he said he could soon cure him. Taking from his bag a small paper carefully folded together, he opened it, and handing it to the stranger, said: "There, sir, just wet your finger and dip it into this powder and rub your tooth with it." The gentleman did so, and in a few minutes exclaimed:

"Wonderful! the pain is quite gone." He gave the man a dollar, and invited him to have supper with him. All who were present wanted to have some of this wonder-working powder, — the man sold nearly a hundred packets. As time went on every one who had the toothache had recourse to this powder; but, strange to say, no one derived the least benefit from it. The fraud was soon apparent. The two men were confederates; the powder was nothing but pulverized chalk. Of what use could that be to relieve pain? This story shows how crafty swindlers are. One ought always to be on one's guard, and not trust strangers too readily.

Q. Are we bound to restore ill-gotten goods?

A. We are bound to restore ill-gotten goods, or the value of them, as far as we are able; otherwise we cannot be forgiven.

The Hidden Casket

To keep property that is found often brings trouble on the finder. A mason, who was at work in a building, found a casket concealed in a cavity in the wall. He took it out, forced it open, and found that it contained gold ornaments, rings, bracelets, and a watch set with diamonds. Without saying a word to any one, he took home the treasure he had found. A short time after he went to a goldsmith in the town — it was Leipzig — and offered him the things for sale. The goldsmith instantly gave him in charge, for the things had belonged to a rich jeweler who had been murdered and robbed in Leipzig. The

nason, being quite unable to prove that he had found the jewelry, was put into prison and tried for the murder of the jeweler. Bitterly did he rue his folly in concealing his discovery of the casket.

The Usurious Corn Merchant

St. Bernardine of Sienna relates the following incident: In the neighborhood of Rimini, a town on the coast of Italy, there was a famine in the year 1400. Many persons died of starvation; yet there was one of the citizens who, though he had large stores of corn, could not be prevailed upon to bring them into the market. The price of wheat had already risen to 40 soldi the bushel, but so avaricious was he, that he determined to wait until it had risen yet higher. The starving citizens besieged him with entreaties to sell to them. To escape their importunities, he withdrew to his country house. Every day he obtained information as to the price for which corn was selling, determined not to part with his store until it reached 50 soldi. One day he saw several wagons laden with wheat pass by his windows. Astonished at the sight, he went out and asked the drivers whence they came. They replied that they came from Rimini, two vessels laden with corn having come into the harbor, and the whole cargo had been sold at $3\frac{1}{2}$ soldi the bushel. The merchant stood staring, as if he were struck by lightning; he kept repeating the words: "Three and a half!" To every question addressed to him, he answered: "Three and a half!" It was soon apparent that the man had

lost his reason. He was taken to an asylum, where he died. Here we see how unjust gains bring a curse with them. The unfortunate persons who died of hunger went mad. By the just judgment of God the monopolist, who wanted to enrich himself at their expense, went mad also.

The Millionaire in an Omnibus

We are bound to restore the property of others. There once lived in Brussels an immensely rich man, who amused himself in a singular way, by testing the honesty of his fellow-men. He used to take long rides every day in an omnibus, always sitting next the door, so that all the payments passed through his hands. Now, whenever the conductor had to give change, the old gentleman adroitly slipped a piece of money out of his own pocket into the change as he passed it. Then he observed the passengers narrowly. They counted their money carefully, and as soon as they perceived that they had got too much, they pocketed it at once, and said nothing about it, imagining that the conductor had made a mistake. Although they knew he was not well paid, no one had the honesty or the kindness to give the poor man back his money. At length one day a young woman, when she counted her change, said: "Conductor, you have given me too much," and she handed him the half-franc which the old gentleman had added to it. The latter was so pleased with the girl's honesty that he made inquiries about her and constituted her his heiress. On his death the poor

seamstress found herself the owner of a million francs. Honesty is the best policy.

The Result of Moving a Landmark

A peasant proprietor moved the landmark which indicated the boundary of his land, for the sake of enlarging his meadow by a few feet. Shortly afterwards he went to gather the apples off an apple tree which stood close by. While so engaged, the branch on which he was standing broke, and he fell, striking his head with such force on the boundary stone that he was killed on the spot. Had he left it where it was before, he would have fallen on the soft grass and sustained little or no injury. Here one sees the truth of the words: In that wherein a man sins, in the same he is punished; and also of the saying: —

> "Beware of stealing from foe or friend,
> Lest thus you come to an evil end."

The Basket of Earth

Thieves cannot go to heaven. A poor widow had been deprived of a piece of land belonging to her, by an avaricious neighbor. One day when she saw her oppressor at work in the fields, she went up to him and begged him to let her have a basketful of earth. The rich man mockingly assured her she was welcome to it. When the basket was filled, the woman could not lift it; it was too heavy for her, so she was obliged to ask the man to help her. He could scarcely lift it, on account of its weight. "If you find this basket of earth too heavy to carry,"

the widow said to him, "how will you bear the burden of the whole piece of land, which you have taken from me, through all eternity?" Those words impressed the man and brought him to repentance, so that he restored the land to its rightful owner.

Q. Are we obliged to repair the damage we have unjustly caused?

A. We are bound to repair the damage we have unjustly caused.

A New Style of Duel

A Franciscan monk, Father Fidelis by name, who was much esteemed in Paris on account of his eloquent discourses, was one morning on his way to the church where he was to say Mass. Just as he was passing by a coffee-house, an officer stepped out, and staring at him in a scornful way, called him all manner of names. The Franciscan went up to him, and said: "Sir, you have insulted me; I demand satisfaction." Seeing that the officer was struck dumb by this unexpected boldness on the monk's part, the Father continued: "As I am the offended party, I have the right to choose the weapons. I choose confession, and I expect you to come to me to-night, to arrange matters." He told him where he lived, and went on his way. The officer, who was a man of honor, actually went to the house where the Franciscan lived, in order to apologize. What passed between them on that occasion is not known; but on the morrow the officer was seen to receive holy communion from the monk's hand. From that time

forth they were the best of friends. Duels such as these are harmless, nay, they are to be commended, for they are of good service to Church and State.

The Child who Lost her Money

The following incident affords proof of the saying that honesty is the best policy. A kind-hearted man saw a little girl in the street, crying bitterly. He went up to her and asked her what was the matter. She told him her parents had sent out to buy bread, and she had lost the ten cents they had given her. "That is a bad job," the man replied. "Why were you not more careful?" The girl answered: "I know I have been very careless, and I am quite willing to bear the punishment. I am only sorry for my parents' sake, who have to work hard for their bread." The man was so pleased at the good feeling the girl displayed that he gave her ten cents, and went on his way. In a few minutes she came running after him, and gave him back the money with thanks, saying she had found her own ten cents. The man would not take it, but gave her half a dollar besides. The child demurred to accepting what seemed to her so large a sum. She said she had only done what she ought. "For that very reason, that you have done what is right," answered the old man, with a smile, "you deserve to be rewarded." If man recompenses honesty, how much the more will God do so. If, as the Scriptures say, the privations of this life bear no proportion to the glory to come, it is equally true that dishonest gains will bear no comparison with the punishments to follow

The Sons who would not Suffer for their Father

Thieves and swindlers are reluctant to part with their ill-gotten gains, even on their deathbed. A rich man who was known to have amassed his wealth by unfair means, had a wound in his arm which mortified, so that his life was despaired of. The priest was summoned to prepare him for death. He urged most emphatically upon the dying man the duty of restoring the property he had acquired wrongfully. But the man would not hear of doing so, alleging that he could not reduce his sons to beggary. Then the priest bethought him of an artifice whereby he might bring the swindler to repentance. He said that he knew of a sure means of curing gangrene; it was that some living person should allow his hand to be partially burned, so that some drops of fat should fall on the part affected. The man's three sons were called, but not one of them would sacrifice himself in this way for his father. Then the priest said to the dying man: "See, not one of your sons would consent to bear the pain of burning for a few seconds for your sake, and you will actually endure to be tortured for their sake, not for a few moments only, but throughout all eternity, and not merely have your hand burned, but be in hell fire, body and soul." At these words a thrill of horror ran over the sick man; his eyes were opened to the fate awaiting him if he continued obdurate. He consented to make confession and reparation. Let the thief who will not restore what he has stolen

think of eternal punishment. (This anecdote is related by St. Alphonsus.)

Q. What is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

The Loss of a Hand

Unjust dealing is punished by the secular authority. In bygone times the penalties inflicted by law were far more severe than they are at present, as may be seen from the following incident. In the year 1648 at Münster, the so-called Treaty of Westphalia was signed, which put an end to the Thirty Years' War. One of the clerks forged a document bearing on the conclusion of peace. The forgery was discovered, and he was condemned to lose his right hand, which had been the instrument of his fraud. That hand, now nothing more than skin and bone, is still preserved in the town hall at Münster. If the secular authorities proceed so rigorously against dishonesty, surely God will not leave breaches of the eighth commandment unpunished.

A Childish Witness

We ought not to be ready to believe those who speak evil of others. In a lonely village there was an aged woman who lived entirely alone. One day it was discovered that she had been murdered. Suspicion fell on a man of bad character who resided in the same place. A girl who dearly loved impor-

tance and always had something remarkable to relate, declared that she had seen the individual in question washing his clothes in a brook, and she had noticed that the water was red with blood. The police, hearing of this, searched the man's house, and in fact found some wet articles of clothing. Thereupon they arrested the man, and the girl was summoned to appear against him in court. When the judge began to question her, he perceived from her manner that she was not sure of what she said. He therefore warned her in forcible language of the sad consequences of not speaking the truth; this admonition took effect. The girl began to cry and acknowledged that her statement was a complete fiction. Alexander the Great set a good example in always closing one ear when any one brought accusations before him. He used to say: "I turn one ear to the accuser; the other I reserve for the accused."

The Two Ladies in the Theater

Prudence forbids us to speak against others, lest the individual spoken of or one of his friends should be present. In one of the principal theaters of a large town a popular actor was to appear on the stage. When he came forward one lady said to the lady sitting next her: "I cannot conceive what people find to admire in that horrid man. He is no favorite of mine." The person addressed replied calmly: "He is a great favorite of mine." "Is it possible?" the first speaker rejoined. "Oh, yes, he is my husband," was the reply. The other blushed

crimson; it need hardly be said that not another word passed between the two.

My Sister and my Mother

At an open-air concert two gentlemen who were slightly acquainted were sitting together and talking about various things. Presently one of them, indicating two ladies who were seated at a table close by, said to his companion: "Can you tell me the name of that frightful woman over there?" The other gentleman made him point out the person thus described more definitely; then he answered: "That is my sister." His interlocutor grew very red, and to cover his confusion said: "No, I do not mean that one, I meant the one sitting next her, — the older lady." "That is my mother," was the reply. It is difficult to imagine the shame and embarrassment of the questioner.

A Bishop Entertains his Enemies

The Emperor Maximian gave orders that St. Antonius, Bishop of Nicomedia, should be cast into prison for his profession of the Christian faith. A party of soldiers, sent to arrest him, happened to go to his house in quest of refreshment. Antonius showed them the greatest hospitality. After they had eaten and drunk, they asked him where they could find Bishop Antonius. The saintly man replied that he himself was the person whom they sought. The soldiers, desirous of showing their gratitude for his hospitality, said they would not arrest him, but would report that they had been unable to find him.

But Antonius would not consent to this ; he refused to be saved by means of a lie. So he went with them to the emperor.

All here Say "No"

At the time of the *Kulturkampf* in Germany, Catholic priests were forbidden even to administer the last sacraments to the dying. The parish priests, however, did their duty. There was one named Maier in one of the larger towns who did not hesitate to carry the last sacraments to the sick. A police constable, having heard that he had just done so, instantly went in search of the priest. He had reason to believe that he was in an omnibus. Accordingly he stopped the vehicle, wrenched the door open and said : "Is pastor Maier here ?" Now the object of the man's search happened to be sitting next the door, dressed in secular clothes ; he coolly looked at the other passengers and repeated the question : "Is pastor Maier here ?" They looked at one another, and one and all answered : "No." Thereupon the priest turned to the policeman, and said : "You hear for yourself ; all these gentlemen say that he is not here." The policeman closed the door and went away.

Q. What are we commanded by the eighth commandment?

A. We are commanded by the eighth commandment to speak the truth in all things and to be careful of the honor and reputation of every one.

Prince Albert's Action in Regard to Dueling

Prince Albert, the consort of the late Queen Victoria, entirely did away with dueling in the English army. He caused the clause in the military code relating to affairs of honor to be altered and put into this shape: "Every gentleman is bound, if he has wronged or insulted another, to apologize and atone for his fault. The offended party is bound to accept the apology and explanation graciously." This Prince Albert did, not only in view of the spirit of religion and the advance of civilization, but also out of consideration for military men. In fact, an officer is in an unpleasant position, whether he accepts a challenge or not. If he does so, he sins against the laws of religion and of the State; if he does not accept it, he is looked down upon by his comrades in the army.

A False Alarm

No one trusts or respects liars. There was a shepherd who, while guarding his sheep, cried aloud: "A wolf, a wolf!" All the other shepherds hastened to his help; but when they got to him, he only laughed at them; he had not really seen a wolf. Another time he played the same trick, shouting for help at the top of his voice. Again the other herdsmen hurried up, but no wolf appeared. One day, however, the wolves did attack his sheep, and

although he called loudly for assistance no one came, and the wolves tore his flock and carried off the lambs. A liar is not believed even when he speaks the truth.

An April Fool

Lying is often attended by prejudicial consequences, and sometimes occasions irreparable disasters. A countryman was traveling by rail one 1st of April. Presently a man in a superior position to himself, who knew him quite well, got into the coach, and said to him: "Are you aware that a fire has broken out in your village, and several houses, yours among the number, are in flames?" This intelligence, false though it was, was such a shock to the poor man that he had a stroke of apoplexy, and fell dead. The other man deeply deplored his foolish joke, but he could not restore life to the dead.

The Greatest Sinner

He who publishes his own shame, violates his duty to himself. A lady once came to the famous preacher Abraham of Santa Clara, and loudly bewailed the fact that she was the greatest of sinners. Now, that lady was known to be always praying in the church, and the sensible, experienced priest quickly discerned that her self accusation was not only contrary to the respect every one owes to himself, but that it arose from pride; for one who is truly humble does not display his humility. He accordingly said: "It is much to be deplored that you can venture to publish

that fact. I do not wish to have anything to do with an individual who proclaims herself to be the greatest sinner in the world." Whereupon the lady grew very angry, and exclaimed: "Who can say a word against me? I have done nothing wrong. I spend the greater part of my time in the church, I fast frequently, and perform other good works." The preacher bowed and withdrew, leaving the lady, who continued to boast of all her good deeds, alone in the room. — No one ought to blame himself publicly, since for what a man gives himself out to be, others will take him.

The Monk and the Robber

We ought not to be hasty in thinking evil of others. The Superior of a monastery was one day called to administer the last sacraments to a hermit, who was at the point of death. He set out without delay, taking with him a trusty lay brother as his companion. On the way they were followed by a man who entered with them into the hermit's cell and displayed great emotion while the last rites were performed. Yet his fierce look and his general appearance led to the surmise that he was a robber. When the abbot and his attendant were about to return to the convent, this man again followed them, saying he was desirous to confess. But the abbot suspected a trick, and only walked on the faster. The stranger quickened his pace also, to overtake them. Perceiving this, the abbot hurried on all the more swiftly, and the man began to run after them. Suddenly, however, he uttered a shriek and fell to the

ground. Then the two religious, turning back, found that he had in his haste struck his head against a tree, and lay there bathed in blood and lifeless. The abbot was deeply grieved at the fate of the unhappy man, while the brother manifested the utmost satisfaction. His Superior asked him angrily what there was to be glad about. The monk was not in the least abashed at this question; he answered: "I rejoice because I believe that the Lord Jesus has pardoned this man as He pardoned the good thief." An unkind person looking on, might have thought that the brother felt a malicious pleasure in the robber's fate.

A Faithful Messenger

Constantine II, the emperor of the Greeks, was at one time besieging the town of Beneventum, which was defended by King Romuald. The latter despatched his trusty servant Goswald to his father, the king of the Lombards, to entreat him to come to his relief. On his return the messenger was taken prisoner, before he could make his way into the beleaguered town. The enemy conducted him on to the fortifications, in sight of the besieged garrison, and commanded him, as he valued his life, to announce to them that no succor was to be looked for. When Goswald found himself within sight of his own people, he shouted to them: "Take courage! The Lombards are coming to your relief." No sooner had he uttered those words than he was stabbed to the heart. That messenger affords a splendid instance of fidelity and truthfulness.

Colmar Helps the Soldiers in their Search

At the time of the French Revolution the active and zealous priest, Père Colmar (afterwards Bishop of Mayence) was ruthlessly persecuted. A reward of between three and four thousand francs was set upon his head. One evening a party of soldiers came to the house where he was concealed. After they had knocked loudly at the door, it was opened to them by Colmar himself, disguised as a servant, carrying a lamp in his hand. In answer to the inquiry whether Colmar was living there, he said: "I think you will hardly take him by surprise. However, you can come with me, and we will search for him." Thereupon he conducted the soldiers over the house; they looked everywhere, and were obliged to withdraw without accomplishing their object. As he let them out he said: "Did I not tell you from the first that you would not find him?"

Q. What is forbidden by the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment forbids all rash judgments, backbiting, slanders, and lies.

Michael Angelo Puts to Shame those who were Jealous of him

The jealous man makes himself ridiculous. When the famous painter and sculptor Michael Angelo went to Rome from his birthplace, Florence, the Roman artists, envious of the fame his genius won, sought to destroy his reputation. To defeat their efforts he secretly carved a statue after the

antique, representing the god Bacchus. In one place where it would not be readily observed, he cut his own name; then he broke off one of the arms of the statue, blackened it to give it an appearance of age, and buried it in a vineyard where he knew a house was to be erected. While digging the foundations of the house, the workmen came upon the buried statue; it was taken to a museum, and all the best artists in Rome came to inspect it, and pronounce upon its value as a work of art. They were unanimous in their admiration of it, and judged it to be of high antiquity. Michael Angelo alone expressed a different opinion; instead of extolling its excellence, he pointed out several defects. His fellow-artists hotly contested all he said, declaring the statue to equal the work of the best masters of sculpture. Then Michael Angelo revealed the truth of the matter. He produced the arm which had been broken off, and showed the place where his own initials were carved. Those who had endeavored to injure him from motives of envy retired in confusion. Thus jealousy is often its own chastisement.

Aristides the Just

Deputies and electors are responsible to almighty God for the misfortunes they bring on others by reckless voting. Aristides, one of Athens' greatest men, universally called *the just*, was accused by certain persons who were envious of him of striving to acquire for himself undivided sway. He was consequently condemned to banishment for ten years. This sentence was passed by what is called *ostracism*.

Every citizen entitled to a vote was provided with a shell, or potsherd, on which, if he desired Aristides to be exiled, he was to inscribe his name. The shells were to be deposited in a certain place in the market square. Now, it happened that a man who was unable to write went up to Aristides, who was standing near, and not recognizing him, asked him to write the name "Aristides" on his voting shell. Aristides complied with his request. He then inquired: "What have you against that man? Why do you wish him exiled?" The man answered: "Why do I vote for his banishment? Because I am so weary of hearing him called the just.'" Thus for such an utterly foolish reason he contributed to bring misfortune on a good and upright man. This is often the way at elections. The voters forget that they will have to answer to God for the disposal of their votes.

The Goldsmith and his Apprentice

It is part of our duty toward the reputation of our neighbors not to suspect others rashly. A goldsmith had an apprentice who was a good, industrious lad. One day the goldsmith found two jewels hidden in a hole of the window sill by the youth's bed. Directly he accused him of having stolen them, and though he protested his innocence, he beat him cruelly and drove him out of the house. A few days later he found two stones again in the selfsame niche. He watched, and discovered that a tame magpie which belonged to the apprentice slyly took away the stones and hid them in the hole when the window was open. On finding this the man re-

gretted having acted so hastily, when it was too late to make amends. Remember the true saying: —

"Beware of suspicion's poisoned dart;
Too often it makes the innocent smart."

The Errand to the Limekiln

Elizabeth, queen of Portugal, whose remains rest at Coimbra in a state of perfect preservation to this day, was specially distinguished by her charity to the poor. One of her pages, a pious young man, was intrusted with the distribution of her alms. A servant attached to the court became jealous of him, and bethought himself how he could ruin him. One day when he was out hunting with the king, he took the opportunity of slandering the page, who was a favorite with the queen, bringing all manner of charges against him. The king believed the backbiter; and acting on impulse, he sent for the manager of the royal limekilns, and said: "To-morrow morning I shall send one of the pages to you; he will ask whether my orders have been fulfilled. Have him seized immediately and cast into the kiln." Early the next morning the king summoned the young man into his presence, and bade him repair at once to the limekiln, and inquire of the superintendent whether the king's orders had been accomplished. The page set out on his way without a suspicion of evil. As he passed by a village church, the bell was ringing for Mass. He entered with the intention of assisting at the holy sacrifice, thinking his errand was not pressing. But his enemy, finding he had achieved so easy a victory,

wanted to assure himself that the youth had met with his fate. Shortly after the page's departure he followed him to the limekiln, and eagerly asked whether his Majesty's command had been executed. Scarcely had he uttered these words than two of the workmen laid hands on him, dragged him to the oven, and despite his protestations, threw him in. Not long after the queen's pious attendant came up and inquired whether the king's will had been done. The workmen replied in the affirmative, told him what had occurred, and evidently looked for a gratuity. The page returned to the palace and brought the answer to his royal master. The king was startled and horrified when he heard the turn matters had taken. He saw in it the disposition of Providence, and a proof of the young man's innocence. How true is the saying: "He who digs a pit for others, falls into it himself."

Cardinal Lavigerie at the Depot

The famous Cardinal Lavigerie, who did so much for the liberation of slaves and the conversion of the negro race, once returned to France and revisited Nancy, of which see he had formerly been bishop. Since he left France he had grown his beard; this altered his appearance so much that he was not easily recognized. While he was waiting at the railway depot, a man went up to him, and said: "You are a missionary, I presume. May I ask where you come from?" "I come from Algiers," was the reply. "Then you probably know our former bishop, Cardinal Lavigerie?" The cardinal

replied that he knew him very well indeed. "How does the man act now? Is he as queer as ever?" the man inquired. "Since he has been exposed to the hot sun of Africa, he is worse than ever," the cardinal replied. Thereupon the man began to tell all manner of tales about the bishop, speaking of him in the most depreciatory way. The train came up, and the cardinal and his critic entered the same coach, as their way lay in the same direction. All the time they were together the man did nothing but abuse his former bishop and repeat the slanders current about him. When he reached his destination and was about to alight, the cardinal handed him his card, saying: "Some of the things you have said are true, but the greater part are false." When the man saw the name on the card, he was ready to sink into the ground, so great was his dismay and confusion.

A Roman Emperor's Hatred of Lying

The Roman emperor Claudius, on being informed that a Roman citizen who was not long dead had been a dreadful liar, so that no one could believe a word that he said, instantly ordered the residence of the man to be razed to the ground, his property confiscated, and his family banished from Rome, so as to wipe out all remembrance of him from the face of the earth. See the high esteem the pagans had for truth.

The Empty Watch Case

In a New York court of law, a woman was suing for damages on account of injuries alleged to have

been sustained in a railway accident. The shock of the collision, she claimed, had rendered her totally deaf in one of her ears. The lawyer for the railroad company approached her, and placing his watch near the injured ear, demanded if she could hear it tick. She replied in the negative. He then placed the watch near her other ear, and putting the same question, received in reply an emphatic affirmative. Turning then to the jury and opening the watch case, he cried out: "Gentlemen of the jury, what think you of the claim for damages of a lady whose hearing has been impaired, forsooth, but one of whose ears is still so sound that she can hear a ticking in an empty watch case?" Needless to say the woman lost her case.

Q. What must they do who have lied about their neighbor and seriously injured his character?

A. They who have lied about their neighbor and seriously injured his character must repair the injury done as far as they are able, otherwise they will not be forgiven.

The Thievish Jackdaw

A poor family who depended almost entirely for their daily sustenance on the milk of their goat, had the misfortune to lose the animal, which, while browsing on the brink of a declivity, fell down and was killed. The poor people were in despair; only the mother trusted in the divine assistance. Now, they had a tame jackdaw which one of the children had brought as a fledgling out of the forest and reared as a pet.

In the midst of their lamentations over the lost goat, this bird came hopping in at the window with a ducat in its beak. The children wanted to keep the money, but their father said: "No; the bird has stolen the money somewhere. We must not keep it. I will make inquiries, and if I find the owner, the ducat shall be given back." That same evening he heard loud talking in the house of a rich neighbor. Going nearer, he overheard the master of the house saying: "Oh, you dishonest fellow! You have stolen one of the twenty ducats which I got for my two oxen. Give it back to me this moment, or I shall dismiss you at once." The poor man lost not an instant; he hastened into the house, and explained the matter. The rich farmer was ashamed; he gave the lost ducat to the servant whom he had falsely accused of theft; while on the poor man he bestowed another goat in the place of the one that had died, on condition that he should say nothing about the occurrence in the village. Hence we see on the one hand the evil of hasty judgment, and on the other the good results of honesty.

Barbarossa's Vengeance

Insults often cost the insulter dearly. The consort of the powerful emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, on one occasion visited Milan, then a great and prosperous city. The citizens seized the august lady, set her on an ass with her face to the tail, and led her about the streets, heaping her with insults. When the emperor heard of this outrage, he advanced upon Milan with a large army. Furious as a lion in wait

for its prey, he besieged the town for a year and a half; the water supply was cut off, and no provisions were allowed to be taken into the town. Famine at length forced the inhabitants to surrender. All the citizens were compelled to march past their imperial conqueror with a rope round their necks, to indicate that they deserved to be hung for their act of high treason against the empress. The men in authority had also to carry a sword suspended from their necks, to show that they had incurred the penalty of beheadal. All the soldiers were compelled to lay down their arms, and the imperial troops received permission to plunder the city. Finally the fortifications were overthrown and the walls razed to the ground. Then the emperor Barbarossa withdrew, leaving the city utterly devastated. This is matter of history, but much the same happens on a small scale in daily life. People should beware of insulting others.

The Bishop Sends for the Slandered Individual

Several gentlemen were one day dining with a bishop. While at table one of the guests began to speak against an absent person in a manner which was highly displeasing to the bishop and the other gentlemen. In order to silence the calumniator, the prelate called one of his servants, and in a loud voice ordered him to go and bring the gentleman whose character was thus aspersed. The slanderer was dismayed; he begged his host to revoke this order, and not another word that could be objected to passed his lips

The Nobleman who Slandered

He who will not repair the injury he has done to his neighbor's reputation, cannot obtain forgiveness. A Spanish nobleman went to a man of high repute for sanctity, in order to consult him about a doubtful matter. "Not long ago," he said to him, "I was in the company of several persons of rank. The conversation turned upon a lady of high birth, whose virtue and purity of life were universally praised. Wishing to give myself importance, I maintained the contrary, and made as if I were acquainted with certain secret and grave misdeeds of the princess in question. Since that time my conscience has given me no peace. I have come to you for advice and consolation." The holy man addressed a few questions to the nobleman, then he said plainly: "Nothing can be done; you cannot be forgiven." The nobleman went away in despair. He resolved to go to Salamanca, where there was a famous university, and where the ablest and most learned theologians of the day were to be found. To them he related the whole story. This was the answer he received: "Every sin can be expiated by penance; therefore yours can be. What you have to do is either by word of mouth or in writing, to inform every one who was present when you calumniated that lady that your statements were untrue. After that, go to confession." But to this the nobleman would not consent; he told the theologians that his reputation and his rank alike forbade him to acknowledge himself to be a liar. "In that case," was the reply, "the

holy man you consulted was right when he declared that nothing could be done for you, and you could not obtain forgiveness."

Plucking a Fowl

He who has robbed his neighbor of his good name, can never repair the injury he has done him. A woman once came to St. Philip Neri, in Rome, and acknowledged she was much given to backbiting; she asked him to advise her how she was to get rid of this fault. First of all the saint impressed upon her the grievous mischief that she did by slandering others. But she would not allow that she did much harm by it. Then the saint said: "Do this for your penance, my daughter. Go to the market and buy a fowl in its feathers, and carry it through the streets; as you go along, pluck out the feathers one by one and scatter them on the way. When you have done this, come back to me." The woman did as he bade her, and returned to him, wondering what he would say next. St. Philip praised her obedience; then he told her to go through the streets again and pick up all the feathers which she had thrown away. She answered: "Father, that is impossible, for the wind will have carried them away in all directions." He replied: "Just as the wind disperses feathers in all directions, so it is with calumny. The persons who hear it go their several ways and carry it far and wide, so that it is beyond recall." This practical illustration taught the woman the immense evil done by the backbiter, and from that time forward she was more cautious with her tongue.

The Pillow and the Stone

The same truth was made evident by a catechist to his scholars in the following manner. He said: "Supposing some one was to take a pillow from a bed and carry it to the top of a tower, and tear it open and scatter all the contents; the feathers would fly about in all directions. Then suppose the man wants to collect all the feathers and fill the pillow again. Could he do it? No, he would find it quite impossible. So it is with slander. When once it has been sown broadcast there is no recalling it. Throw enough mud, the saying is, some is sure to stick. For even if the slanderer wishes it, he cannot go round to every individual and revoke what he has said." Again the catechist addressing his class, said: "I have often noticed how, when a stone is thrown into water, it makes circles on the surface of the water, small ones at first, and these go on increasing. So it is with calumny. The slanderer may only speak to one person; but he has thrown the stone, and his hearer spreads the lie in ever widening circles. Have you ever seen that, children? Have you watched the circles, first small, then larger, made by a stone falling into the river?" All the children answered, "Yes." The catechist continued: "Well, then, when the circles on the surface of the water have got so large as to reach to the river's brink, have you not seen them grow smaller again, and last of all the stone come up out of the water? Surely, you have seen that, too?" The children replied that they had never seen such a thing.

"No," their teacher added, "you are quite right. Such a thing has never happened and can never happen. That is the way with slander. Try as you will, the mischief done can never fully be set right."

St. Athanasius' Flight

It is permissible in case of need to save one's own life, or that of another, by means of an equivocal answer. St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, was relentlessly persecuted on account of his stanch defense of the Catholic faith. The Emperor Julian the Apostate gave orders to his soldiers to seize him, and put him to death. Athanasius hastened to the banks of the Nile, and there embarked on a boat, to make good his escape. Soon he perceived that he was being pursued by the soldiers on a second ship. Thereupon he begged the crew of his boat to turn and go to meet the pursuers. They did so, and as they passed the soldiers, the latter called out: "Is Bishop Athanasius on board?" Athanasius returned this answer: "He is not far off. Make haste and you will soon catch him." The soldiers rowed onward as fast as they could, and Athanasius was enabled to escape.

The Archbishop's Flight

Sir Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, had much to suffer at the hands of King Henry II, on account of his courageous defense of the rights of the Church. On one occasion, when the king had sent out soldiers to arrest him, the archbishop disguised himself and fled on horseback from his palace.

In passing through a wood he chanced to encounter the soldiers. They asked him whether he was the archbishop? The prelate replied with a smile: "Judge for yourselves whether this is what an archbishop's retinue would be." The soldiers went on their way.

Q. What is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

St. Bernard's Victory

It is related of St. Bernard that he once allowed his eyes to rest for a moment with some degree of curiosity on a person of the opposite sex. Although not conscious of anything more sinful than a passing curiosity, he no sooner reflected on the danger he had run than he was filled with remorse and self-reproach at his indiscretion. To punish himself, and as a warning for the future, he ran and cast himself into a half-frozen pond, where he lay so long that the body's natural heat was well-nigh extinguished. God amply rewarded him not only by freeing him from that moment from all motions of concupiscence, but by giving him that ardent love of Jesus and Mary which breathes forth in all his writings.

Q. What are we commanded by the ninth commandment?

A. We are commanded by the ninth commandment to keep ourselves pure in thought and desire.

The Painter and the Fair Youth

A bad life sometimes disfigures the body. Leonardo da Vinci, the celebrated artist, on one occasion while walking through the streets of a large town, noticed a young man of exceptional beauty, whose countenance expressed innocence and purity in a remarkable degree. He followed the youth, and addressing him, requested him to sit for him, as he was desirous of painting his portrait, promising at the same time to pay him liberally. The young man consented gladly to the proposal. The portrait, when exhibited, was universally admired; every one who saw it was enchanted with the angelic expression of the features. Some twenty years later, Leonardo da Vinci happened to revisit the same town. In the street he chanced to meet a man of so diabolical and vicious an expression of countenance, that he was quite struck with it, and said to himself: "That man might very well be painted as a pendant to the portrait of the innocent young man of yore." At that moment the man at whom he was looking came up to beg for an alms. The artist said: "If you will come with me, I will pay you well, for I wish to paint your likeness." The man consented at once, and accompanied the artist to his studio. When the portrait was completed, the painter placed it by the side of that of the young man whom he had depicted twenty years ago. Thereupon the vicious-looking rascal changed color, and his eyes filled with tears. "Alas!" he exclaimed, pointing to the earlier picture, "that, too, is my portrait. I sat for it twenty years ago. Then I

was good and innocent; now I am a bad, wicked man." And he left the house weeping bitterly. — Hence one sees that transgressing the commandments of God sometimes even transforms the exterior beauty of the sinner.

Q. What is forbidden by the ninth Commandment?
A. The ninth commandment forbids unchaste thoughts, desires of another's wife or husband, and all other unlawful impure thoughts and desires.

The Tempting Devils

Two devils were seen one day speaking together concerning the progress they were making with two persons whom they were tempting. One said: "I am doing very well with my victim. When I present a foul thought to him, he takes to it, dwells on it, examines how far he has pondered on it, whether it was his own fault, whether he resisted or consented, whence it came, and whether he gave occasion to it; in short, as often as I please I torture him in this way, and put him almost beside himself." "For me," said the other, "I am losing my time with my subject. Whenever I present a bad thought, he turns in prayer to God or the Virgin, or to some saint, or else he occupies his mind with some other affair; so I know not where to take him." The devil is well pleased when we amuse ourselves reasoning on a bad temptation. A good way to defeat him is not even to want to listen, but to turn the mind away.

Q. Are impure thoughts and desires always sins?

A. Impure thoughts and desires are always sins, unless they displease us and we try to banish them.

The Monk and the Wind

Temptation is not sinful in itself. A religious once complained to his abbot that he was greatly tormented with evil thoughts and was much distressed in consequence. The abbot took him into the open air and desired him to catch the wind in his cloak and keep it still. The brother, astonished at receiving such a strange command, replied that he could not possibly do so. Then the abbot said to him: "Just as you cannot catch the wind in your mantle and keep it quiet, so it is impossible for you to prevent the violent assaults of evil thoughts and unruly concupiscences. Yet you ought to resist the force of the wind, and not allow yourself to be thrown down by it. It is the same with temptation; all you can do is resolutely to withstand it." The brother's mind was set at rest by this instruction, and he struggled more valiantly than ever against the temptations that assailed him.

Q. What is the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

The Pedestrian and the Carriage

A journeyman in search of employment was walking along a road, feeling much dejected, because, although he had been asking for work at several

places, he had not met with any. Presently a carriage passed him, in which a well-dressed gentleman, evidently an officer, was seated. The man said to himself: "How unequal our lots are in this world; here am I so poor, and that fellow there so rich. I have to tramp along on foot, and he rides in a carriage." A little farther on he came to an inn, and turned in to rest. The carriage that had passed him on the road was drawn up at the door, and the young man observed, to his surprise, that the officer could not alight without assistance; in fact, he had to be lifted out, as he had lost both his feet. Seeing this, he quite changed his mind. "I would not change with that gentleman," he said to himself; "no, not if he offered me his carriage and horses and all his property; for I have strong, healthy limbs, and consequently I am richer and more to be envied than he is."

The Tame Starling

Thieves are often unmasked. A huntsman had a tame starling in his house, which he had taught to say a few words. When, for instance, he called: "Where are you, my pet?" the bird always answered: "Here I am." One day a boy, the son of a neighbor, went to the huntsman's house. He lingered about, and, as no one was at home, he went in, and saw the starling. He pounced on him, and thrust him into his pocket. As he turned to leave the room, the owner of the house stood in the doorway, just coming in. Thinking to amuse the boy, he called out: "Where are you, my pet?" The star-

ling answered from the boy's pocket: "Here I am." Imagine the dismay and confusion of the little thief! He was so frightened that from thenceforth he never stole other people's property.

Q. What are we commanded by the tenth commandment?

A. By the tenth commandment we are commanded to be content with what we have, and to rejoice in our neighbor's welfare.

A Discontented Boy

We must earn our bread in the sweat of our face. A man had a son whom, when he was fourteen years old, he wanted to apprentice to some calling. He asked him what he would like to be. The boy said he wanted to be a gardener, as he was accustomed to being in the open air. But after a few weeks' trial he came back home, and told his father he could not take to gardening; he had to stoop so much, the blood went to his head and made him giddy, and his back ached dreadfully. He said he wished to be a gamekeeper or forester; then he would not be always bending down, and could enjoy the fresh air better. So his father got him a situation under a gamekeeper. Before long, however, the boy again came back to his father, complaining that he was obliged to get up at a very early hour and go out into the forest when the air was so damp that he got a cough. His father accordingly got him employment with a fisherman, hoping that this would be a more comfortable and healthy way of life for him. But this trade did not

suit him any better than the others ; in a little while he returned home, saying that he could not bear having to stand in the water, as he was often obliged to do, his feet got so cold and the stones hurt them. His one wish now was to be a cook. If he learned cooking, he would have plenty of good food, and be well paid, too. After all, gardeners, gamekeepers, fishermen, had to furnish the cook with the produce of their industry. So he was finally apprenticed to a *chef*, who would teach him his trade. But even this did not suit the discontented boy ; in a few months' time he came back to his father, complaining and grumbling as usual. He could not possibly bear the heat of the kitchen, and standing over the fire made him feel sick and took away his appetite. Now that he wanted to change his work for the fifth time, his father would not hear of it. "No," he said, "I can have no more of this complaining. You must have something you dislike, whatever calling you follow. None of the four elements, it appears, suits you, — earth, air, water, fire. They will be sure to try you in some way, wherever you are ; if you want to escape suffering, you must leave this world altogether. Bear small trials patiently, and you will soon learn to be contented with your lot in life."

The Stork and the Meat of Sacrifice

Property unjustly acquired brings no luck. The following fable is handed down to us from ancient pagan times. A stork looking down from her high nest perceived an altar on which lay the flesh of

the sacrificial victims on glowing embers. Forthwith she flew down, and snatching a piece of flesh, returned with it to her nest, to feed her young. A second time she flew down, to get another piece. But when she got back to her nest, she found it in flames. It had been set on fire by a live coal, carried up with the meat. Thus it often befalls men who have acquired property in an unjust manner. Sooner or later they lose what was their own.

The Hare on the Island

Thieves are often in danger of losing their lives, or they perish miserably. On occasion of a great inundation a hare took refuge on an island in the midst of the flood. A man who noticed the hare, took a boat and rowed across the water to the island, in order to catch it. Now, hares are preserved under the game laws and only licensed sportsmen have the right to shoot them. When the man got to the island, he made the boat fast with a piece of string and tried to catch the hare. The frightened animal leaped into the boat; in consequence of the impetus thus given the string broke and the boat was swiftly carried away by the surging waters. The man, who was not able to swim, found himself a prisoner; for two whole days he was compelled to remain where he was, until the water subsided sufficiently to allow him to escape. Had he been kept a prisoner there for a few more hours, he would have died of starvation and exposure. The covetous often overreach themselves, defeating their purpose and incurring disaster.

Barefoot or no Feet

Let those who are not content with their lot consider how many people there are worse off than themselves. A student who later on rose to eminence was at the commencement of his career so poor that he had not wherewith to buy himself a pair of boots. In fact, he was sometimes actually obliged to go barefoot. He felt this to be a great degradation, and told himself he was the most unlucky man on the face of the earth. One day, when he was specially depressed on account of his destitute condition, he saw a man in the street who had lost both his feet. The sight of this unhappy cripple made a great impression on our student. He said to himself: "I ought to consider myself well off, in having sound feet to walk on. Better far to have feet without shoes than shoes without feet. That poor fellow would gladly go barefoot, if he could have his feet back again." From thenceforth he did not grumble so much at the privations he had to endure.

Q. What is forbidden by the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment forbids all desires to take or keep wrongfully what belongs to another.

Grasp All, Lose All

A reward ought not to be withheld from one who finds and restores lost property. A rich man who resided in a large town lost his purse, containing one hundred louis d'or. He had bills posted up in the streets and otherwise advertised his loss, announcing

that a reward of twenty louis d'or should he given to any one who brought it back to the owner. A poor man happened to find the purse. When he saw the notices in the street, he said to himself that it was better to have twenty gold pieces that were gotten honestly, than a hundred that were dishonestly obtained. So he went to the rich man, and gave him the purse. But the rich man was so mean as to refuse the reward promised to the finder, alleging that there was a valuable jewel in the purse besides the money, and until he had that, he would not give the reward. The matter was brought before the magistrate. He decided the question thus: "This gentleman declares upon his honor that a valuable stone was in the purse that he lost. There is no reason to doubt his word. The finder of the purse, on the other hand, asserts that there was no precious stone in it. As he proved himself to be an honest man by restoring the purse to the owner, we cannot do otherwise than believe what he says. We must therefore conclude that the purse he found is not the one which the gentleman lost. The finder is consequently at liberty to retain it, until the real owner claims his property." As no one came forward to claim the money, the poor man kept it. Thus avarice overreaches itself.

A Slight Offense Severely Punished

One should beware of pilfering, as it leads to more important thefts. A boy had appropriated several trifles belonging to his brothers and sisters. For this his father chastised him very severely.

The boy said to him: "Father, why do you punish me so much for only taking such trifles?" The father answered: "I punish you severely, my boy, because I do not want you, from a little thief, to grow up a big thief. We begin with little faults and end with great misdeeds."

What Is its Value?

Avarice often clings to a man to the very last. A miser lay on his deathbed. His relatives sent for a priest, who came at once and spared no pains in order to touch the dying man and move him to repentance. He spoke to him of God's mercy, of Our Lord's death upon the cross, of the judgment to come, and so on; yet the sinner showed no signs of contrition. Finally the priest held a crucifix before his eyes, hoping this might soften him. Now, this crucifix happened to be a silver one, and seeing it, the sick man's eyes brightened, and his manner changed. The priest thought at last his efforts had been successful, and some impression had been made. But what were the words which came from the dying man's lips? "What, father, do you suppose that crucifix is worth?" Here we see the ruling passion strong in death.

LESSON THIRTY-FIFTH

ON THE FIRST AND SECOND COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH

Q. Which are the chief commandments of the Church.

A. The chief commandments of the Church are six:

1st. To hear Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.

The Angel who Counted the Churchgoer's Steps

A man who had not been to Mass for a long time because he lived at a considerable distance from the church, dreamed a curious dream one night. He fancied that he was going to church, and behind him walked a beauteous angel, who kept counting: one, two, three. Turning around, he asked the angel why he was following him and what he was counting. The angel replied: "I am sent by God to count your steps; for every one you take, you will be rewarded hereafter." After this dream the man awoke; he perceived that God had chosen that means of reminding him of his duty as a Christian, and from that day forth no one was more regular than he was in assisting at the holy sacrifice.

2d. To fast and abstain on the days appointed.

A Ready Answer

A father and mother, together with their little son, went to dine with some relatives one Friday. When they were seated at the table, meat was served. The older visitors partook of it without hesitation, but the child refused to have any. On being asked why he did not do as the others did, he said he was bound to keep the law of the Church. The host laughed and said: "The rule of abstinence is not enjoined on us by God, it is a law made by man." "It is a law made by man," the boy promptly replied, "but it is made by those to whom Christ said, 'He that heareth you, heareth Me; he that despiseth you, despiseth Me.' Thus if I were to eat meat, I should be despising Christ."

3d. To confess at least once a year.

"It is Now too Late"

The Venerable Bede relates in his *Saxon Chronicles* that the pious King Conrad had at his court a nobleman, to whom he was much attached on account of his many excellent qualities. Unhappily, this man neglected the duties of religion, nor had he, despite the entreaties of his master, approached the sacraments in years. At length, attacked by a dangerous malady, the king visited him, and exhorted him to delay no longer but to be at once reconciled to the Church and to God. Some days later the king came again and found the patient *in extremis*, and on repeating his exhortation, received this answer from the agonized sufferer: "It is now too late: there is

now no time for confession. I am lost; hell is my portion." So saying, the man expired, a striking victim of the sin of procrastination.

4th. To receive the Holy Eucharist during the Easter time.

The Doctor at Easter

A clergyman, preaching on the folly of delaying one's conversion, used this parable: "On my way hither," he said, "I beheld a most affecting sight — a man thrown violently from his carriage, and lying in the roadway so bruised and torn that his death seemed imminent. Yet when some one approached and suggested that a surgeon be called, the man cried: 'No, no; I shall wait till Easter before calling in the physician.' The astonished listeners imagined he had lost his senses. Many of you, my friends, are imitating the folly of that unfortunate man. You have fallen in the way, spiritually; you are wounded almost unto death; ay, many of you are already dead, and when I speak to you of an all-powerful physician who is able to cure your wounds and even to restore you to life, you answer me: 'Yes, at Easter I shall have recourse to your physician.' And oh! how many there are among you who do not put even that limit to their delay!"

5th. To contribute to the support of our pastors.

The Result of Obedience in a Convent Garden

In the corner of a monastery garden there was an apple tree which was withered and apparently dead.

The monk who acted as gardener wanted to cut it down. The abbot, however, would not let him do that; he ordered him to put dressing to it, and give it plenty of water. For three years the brother did as the abbot bade him; in the first year, the tree showed signs of life by putting forth leaves; the second year it was full of blossoms, but bore no fruit; while in the third year there was an abundant crop of excellent apples. When the first dish of apples off that tree was placed on the table, the abbot said, "Behold the fruits of obedience." No one was better pleased than the obedient monk. What joy awaits the obedient soul when he will receive the fruit that is the reward of his obedience in heaven.

6th. Not to marry persons who are not Catholics, or who are related to us within the third degree of kindred, nor privately without witnesses, nor to solemnize marriage at forbidden times.

A Catholic who would only Keep God's Commandments

The commandments of the Church are as binding as the commandments of God. A bad Catholic one day remarked to a friend: "God will not condemn me for not keeping the laws of the Church. It is quite enough conscientiously to observe His law, that is, the ten commandments." "Not so," his friend answered. "Has not God enjoined upon us to hear the Church? By not keeping the commands of the Church we violate His law as well."

Q. Is it a mortal sin not to hear Mass on a Sunday or a holy day of obligation?

A. It is a mortal sin not to hear Mass on a Sunday or a holy day of obligation, unless we are excused for a serious reason. They also commit a mortal sin who, having others under their charge, hinder them from hearing Mass, without a sufficient reason.

The Church and the Theater

King Frederic William of Prussia was a god-fearing man, and used invariably to go to Church on all Sundays and holy days. One rough December morning he remarked how few people there were in church; evidently they had not liked to venture out in such bad weather. In the evening of the same day the king drove to the theater. The weather had not improved; on the contrary, the snow was beating down more fiercely than in the morning, yet the theater was crowded. Perceiving this, the king remarked to his attendants: "People will make any sacrifice for the sake of pleasure, but not for God's sake." We are only excused from hearing Mass if serious harm will accrue to us from doing so. Bad weather and a long distance from church do not always furnish an excuse for not attending Mass.

Q. Why were holy days instituted by the Church?

A. Holy days were instituted by the Church to recall to our minds the great mysteries of religion and the virtues and rewards of the saints.

The Three Merchants who Returned from Market on Sunday

If we are going a journey on a Sunday or holy day, we are bound to hear Mass first. Three tradesmen living at Gubbio, in Italy, went with their wagons laden with goods to the yearly market at the town of Cisterno, which was at no great distance. The market was held on a Saturday; the merchants exposed their goods for sale, and when the market was over, they made preparations for returning home the next day, which was Sunday. Two of them planned to journey together, starting at a very early hour in the morning; the third announced his intention of deferring his departure until he had heard Mass. His two comrades accordingly went off with their wagons through the town gates as soon as it was light. After covering a few miles they reached a river which had to be crossed by a long wooden bridge. Now, there had been heavy rains of late which had swollen the river and rendered the supports of the bridge unsafe. Thus it came to pass that the bridge swayed under the weight of the wagons when they were driven over it, and both of them, with the horses and their drivers, fell into the river and were carried away by the force of the current. Hearing the cries of the two merchants, some country people hurried up to their assistance, but they came too late to do more than recover their lifeless remains. When the third merchant drove up later, and saw what had happened, with tears in his eyes he gave thanks to God for the

preservation of his life, which was due to his having remained behind to hear Mass. (This occurrence took place in the year 1886.)

Q. How should we keep the holy days of obligation?
A. We should keep the holy days of obligation as we should keep the Sunday.

St. John and his Partridge

St. John, who was Bishop of Ephesus, had a tame partridge with which he often amused himself in his hours of recreation. One day a stranger came who was armed with a bow and arrows. He had journeyed a long distance to see the bishop. At the moment he arrived St. John was playing with his pet, allowing it to perch on his hand, his shoulder, or his head. The stranger seemed very much surprised that a man who, as he thought, ought to be occupied exclusively with spiritual matters, should spend his time playing with a bird. He ventured to express his astonishment to the bishop. In answer St. John put a question to him, asking why he had unbent his bow? The man replied: "Because if it was kept strung, it would lose its force." "The same principle," St. John said, "holds good in regard to us mortal men, when we have much work and many cares. In order not to sink under their weight a man must relax his mind with some innocent amusement." Thus it will be seen that recreation is not merely allowable, but necessary, and be the day ever so holy, innocent recreation is not inconsistent with one's duty to God.

Q. What do you mean by fast-days?

A. By fast-days I mean days on which we are allowed but one full meal.

The Bad Catholics Put to Shame

We should not be hasty to condemn any one who is seen to eat meat on Friday. A party of Frenchmen who had made an excursion together were dining at a restaurant on the Franco-German frontier. All but one were eating meat, and this one was the butt of continual raillery on his companions' part. They ridiculed him for being afraid to do as he chose. Now, there happened to be a German government official in uniform at a side table, who was also eating meat. One of the Frenchmen turned to him and said, laughing: "Meat tastes just as good on Friday as on any other day, does it not, sir?" The German replied: "I can enjoy meat at any time, for I am a Protestant, and my religion does not prohibit it. But if I were a Catholic, nothing should induce me to touch meat on Fridays." This bold answer silenced the scoffers. It must be remembered that Catholics are exempted from fasting and abstinence in case of sickness, or for any other good reason; consequently one must be careful to guard against rash judgments. It is a sin to suspect others of sin.

Q. What do you mean by days of abstinence?

A. By days of abstinence I mean days on which we are forbidden to eat flesh-meat, but are allowed the usual number of meals.

An Impertinent Hotel Keeper

We ought to return a short answer to those who ridicule us on account of our religion. A Catholic gentleman went into a hotel one Friday to dine. He ordered no meat to be brought him, only meager fare. The host was surprised at this: "I suppose you are a practical Catholic?" he said to the stranger. "That is no business of yours," the latter replied. "Your duty is to satisfy the appetite of your customers, not to inquire what is the religion they profess. Attend to my wants, if you please, and do not trouble yourself about my faith." The hotel keeper colored, and went away abashed.

Q. Why does the Church command us to fast and abstain?

A. The Church commands us to fast and abstain, in order that we may mortify our passions and satisfy for our sins.

The Monk and the Calvinists

A monk who was traveling in Switzerland happened on his journey to enter an inn where a party of Protestants were dining. For the purpose of annoying the religious, and displaying their contempt for his beliefs, from time to time they threw a bit of meat to their dog, saying: "Here, old Papist, catch!" Each time of doing this they looked across at the monk, expecting he would make some remark. As, however, he remained quiet, and did not betray the slightest annoyance at their conduct, one

of them presently said to him: "Do you think it a singular thing that a dog should be named Papist?" "I see nothing singular in it," the monk calmly replied. "As a man's religion is, so is his pope. Your pope is a dog, mine is the vicegerent of God upon earth." This rebuke silenced the scoffers; they looked ashamed, and erelong left the inn.

How true is the distich,—

> "Unless in your own defense you speak,
> In vain respect from others you seek."

A Cardinal's Motive for Fasting

Fasting tends to prolong life. A well-known cardinal named Stanislas Osius observed all the fasts of the Church most scrupulously in spite of his great age. His friends told him that he would shorten his life by his asceticism, and thus the Church would be deprived too soon of one of her most valuable supporters. "On the contrary," the cardinal replied, "I have every reason to expect that if I keep the fasts conscientiously, God will grant me a long life. The fourth commandment says: 'Honor thy father and thy mother that thou mayst be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee.' It is the will of my Father in heaven, almighty God, that I should mortify myself and fast; my mother, the Church, indicates the days on which I am to fast. Since I obey both God and the Church, I hope that length of days will be granted me." The late Pontiff, Leo XIII, was an illustrious example of the effect of abstemiousness on bodily health and prolongation of life.

Q. Why does the Church command us to abstain from flesh-meat on Fridays?

A. The Church commands us to abstain from flesh-meat on Fridays, in honor of the day on which our Saviour died.

Meat for a Dog

The Friday abstinence is nothing to be ashamed of. A Catholic merchant had to go into town one Friday on business. He went to one of the large hotels for dinner, and asked to be served with Friday fare. The hotel keeper instantly said that Friday fare was not to be had, as his guests never required it. "Very well, then, bring me coffee and a roll," the merchant answered. While he sat sipping his coffee, the other guests began to make remarks about the folly of abstaining on Friday, and took care to issue their orders for meat in a particularly loud voice and marked manner. Presently the merchant called out; "Waiter, a plate of roast beef." The other gentlemen and the manager exchanged smiles, for they thought they had shamed the merchant into doing as they did. But when the waiter brought the plate of meat, he said to him: "Put it down on the ground; it is for my dog who is lying under the table. The lower animals eat meat all the days of the week." It need scarcely be added that no more contemptuous remarks were made about the Friday abstinence. What the merchant meant to say was this: Whoso can put no restraint upon his appetite is like the irrational creatures.

An Example from Olden Times

Hippocrates, the father of the medicinal art, who lived about four hundred years before the Christian era, attained the age of a hundred and forty. He was once asked to what circumstance he ascribed his unusually long life. He answered: "I never satisfied my appetite fully. When I rose up from the table, I could always have eaten more with pleasure. To this I ascribe the fact that I have lived to so great an age." Abstemiousness promotes health and length of days.

LESSON THIRTY-SIXTH

ON THE THIRD, FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH

Q. What is meant by the command of confessing at least once a year?

A. By the command of confessing at least once a year is meant that we are obliged, under pain of mortal sin, to go to confession within the year.

Potemkin the Deceiver

The Easter duty is not fulfilled if one receives the sacraments unworthily. The Empress Catharine II of Russia had a favorite, named Potemkin, in whom she reposed great confidence. She once gave him an immense sum of money, on condition that he should people the Crimean peninsula. He promised to convert it into a paradise, yet he squandered the money intrusted to him and did nothing toward the cultivation of the land. Meanwhile he gave the empress highly colored reports of the rapid progress of agriculture and of commerce in the peninsula, and so excited her interest that she determined to go there and see for herself the improved state of the land. Potemkin was in a dilemma, but he knew how to find a way out of it. He caused tradespeople to come from miles round, and peasants

with their herds and flocks, and had cottages run up of wood and pasteboard, with painted frontages. When the empress came on her visit of inspection, she saw on all sides flocks of sheep, and booths wherein tradespeople had set out their wares as if it were a market day. In the distance she saw groups of houses, mere shells, of course, but of that fact she was kept in ignorance. In the harbor vessels of all kinds were collected, by the peremptory orders of the favorite. The whole thing was a fraud and a deception. — Those professing Christians who approach the sacraments at Easter unworthily and make a pretense of penance and good works resemble the cheat who deceived his royal mistress. But God is not deceived; He will call the hypocrite and sacrilegious to strict account. Those who do not speak the truth in the confessional, deceive themselves, not God.

Q. Should we confess only once a year?

A. We should confess frequently, if we wish to lead a good life.

Tamerlane and the Ant

Whenever any one has committed a grievous sin, he ought forthwith to have recourse to the Sacrament of Penance. It is recorded of Tamerlane, the warlike king of the Mongols, who lived about 1400 A.D., that he conceived the idea of conquering the world, and subjugating all the kingdoms of the earth in due course to his sway. Yet his first attempt at

carrying out this bold project proved unsuccessful; he was defeated and put to flight. While hiding as a fugitive behind an old wall, he noticed an ant crawling up the wall, laden with a grain of corn far larger than itself. At the top of the wall was a stone coping which projected slightly beyond the wall; when the ant reached the stone she found it an obstacle to her further progress. She endeavored in vain to surmount it with her load; both she and the grain of corn fell to the ground. For a moment she lay as if stunned, but only for a moment; she took up her burden and commenced to crawl up the wall again. A second time she got as far as the stone, then once more she fell down. This proceeding was repeated no less than fifty times; not till the fifty-first attempt did the tiny creature succeed in carrying the grain of corn over the stone. Tamerlane, who had been watching her untiring efforts, said to himself: "I have only made one attempt, and I am already disheartened; whereas this ant was not discouraged by fifty failures, and finally gained her point. I likewise will begin anew, and however often I am defeated I will never desist until I have conquered. I must and will succeed in conquering the world." Tamerlane did not achieve the conquest of the world, but history tells us that he performed great exploits. — Let those take example by the ant who, despite all their pains, relapse again and again into their old faults. Let them go to confession, and they will at last succeed in overcoming their besetting sin. The word "failure" should have no meaning for one backed up by God.

Q. Should children go to confession?

A. Children should go to confession when they are old enough to commit sin, which is commonly about the age of seven years.

St. Louis in the Confessional

Not only should children go to confession, but every penitent should approach the holy tribunal in the spirit of a child. Christ said that unless we become as little children we shall not enter heaven. The saintly king, Louis IX of France, set a beautiful example of humility. Once when a priest in the confessional addressed him as "your Majesty," he repudiated the title, saying: "Here I am not a king, nor are you my subject; I am a child, and you my father in Christ."

Q. What sin does he commit who neglects to receive communion during the Easter time?

A. He who neglects to receive communion during the Easter time commits a mortal sin.

The King who Would not Read a Letter

He who refuses to listen to salutary admonitions, commits a sin against the Holy Ghost. A conspiracy was formed against Archias, king of the Thebans. One morning the conspirators penetrated into the chief town and made arrangements for the execution of their evil design of attacking the king and putting him to death. Now, a friend of the king gained information of this plot to murder the monarch, and even learned the names of the

conspirators. He immediately wrote a letter to the king, who was giving a grand banquet that day, acquainting him with the danger he was in. The messenger who took the letter was ordered to deliver it to the king himself, and beg him to read it immediately as it contained a most important and urgent communication. But the king, who was making merry with his guests when the letter arrived, thrust it into his pocket, saying grave matters must be postponed until the morrow. That very night he was assassinated. Many Christians act as heedlessly as that monarch. Almighty God warns them by various means (through reverses of fortune, through sermons, good books, the admonitions and examples of others) of the dangerous state of their soul, yet they pay no heed to these warnings and put off amendment to a future time.

Q. What is the Easter time?

A. The Easter time is, in this country, the time between the first Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday.

The Establishment of the Easter Duty

For ages, Christians did not need to be obliged by an express commandment to confess their sins and receive holy communion. It was only in 1216 that the fourth general council held in the church of St. John Lateran in Rome made the annual Easter duty a solemn precept. The decree of the council is thus worded: "Let each of the faithful who has attained the age of discretion, confess secretly all their sins to their own pastor at least once a year, and let

them take care to perform to the best of their ability the penance imposed. Let them also receive, at least at the festival of Easter, the Sacrament of the Eucharist, unless, by advice of their confessor, and for some just and reasonable cause, they may deem it right to abstain for some time from communion. Failing in this, let them be denied entrance into the church during life, and Christian burial at their death."

Q. Are we obliged to contribute to the support of our pastors?

A. We are obliged to contribute to the support of our pastors, and to bear our share in the expenses of the Church and school.

An Alms Rightly Bestowed

The faithful are bound to contribute to the support of the head of the Church. At the time when the Holy See was despoiled of Rome and the states of the Church, some ladies of rank in Vienna made a collection at the doors of the cathedral for the Holy Father. Gold and silver coins in abundance were laid on the plates held by these distinguished mendicants. Presently a wealthy man passed by, and thinking this was an excellent opportunity of testifying his hatred of religion and Christ's vicegerent on earth, he went toward one of the ladies who were collecting for the Holy Father, and took a bank-note from his pocketbook. He did not, however, lay it on the plate she held, but addressing a poor woman who was standing near, said in a

loud and pompous voice: "This is for you. I prefer to give to the needy rather than to those who keep a sumptuous table, and drive about in gilt coaches." The poor woman blushed crimson, and going up to the lady, handed the note to her with the words: "For the Holy Father." She then went away at once, and so did the discomfited donor of the note. We often find more generosity among the poor than among the rich.

Q. What is the meaning of the commandment not to marry within the third degree of kindred?

A. The meaning of the commandment not to marry within the third degree of kindred is that no one is allowed to marry another within the third degree of blood relationship.

A Family Dispersed and Reunited

Many years ago in Boston a man was instantly killed at his work. He left a wife and four children —two girls and two boys — in very poor circumstances. The following day the widow was delivered of a female child, and that evening the poor mother died. When the double funeral was all over, the little ones, after a most pitiable parting, were taken away by the priest and the police to the different charitable institutions. The big officer who carried the baby to the asylum cried heartily over it. In time the children were farmed out in widely different directions; but after many years the oldest girl, with loving perseverance, discovered the whereabouts of her two brothers and sister, and brought them to

know one another. In fact, she and her younger sister for years attended the same parochial school ere they became aware of their relationship. All efforts to find the baby proved fruitless. One of the boys, when grown to man's estate, began to keep company with a young lady in a New Hampshire town. He says he liked her because her presence had a good effect on him, and the thought of her often checked him in moments of temptation. They eventually agreed to become man and wife, and then, to the astonishment of both, her parents revealed the fact that she was only an adopted daughter, — that they had taken her from a Boston asylum as an infant and reared her as their own. The young couple came to Boston one day on an excursion, and the thought occurred to them to visit the orphan asylums and inquire into their antecedents. In a month's time they were to have been married. At the asylum one question led to another, fact was added to fact, and date to date, with the result that the girl was found to be the long-lost baby, — the young man's sister. It is needless to say that a most joyful reunion of all the children soon followed. The young man is still a bachelor, and says he intends to remain so.

Q. What is the meaning of the command not to marry privately?

A. The command not to marry privately means that none should marry without the blessing of God's priests or without witnesses.

The Bashful Lover

A young couple were about to be married. He was an extremely shy youth and objected to the publication of the banns. Said she: "I am going to be married, and I am not afraid, but, rather, I desire that the whole parish should know it. I do not consider it respectable to be married in any other way than in entire conformity with the laws of our Church." She had her way, of course, and posted him off to give their names to the priest. At the parochial residence door he had another attack of bashfulness, and slipping the names into the letter box, made off in a hurry. The priest found the names all right, but as the paper contained no explanations, he read them out the following morning among the dead, and asked the congregation to pray for the repose of their souls.

Q. What is the meaning of the precept not to solemnize marriage at forbidden times?

A. The meaning of the precept not to solemnize marriage at forbidden times is that during Lent and Advent the marriage ceremony should not be performed with pomp or a nuptial Mass.

Married in Mourning

A young couple wished to be married in Lent, and for the life of them they could not see how it could be wrong for them to be married with all solemnity. Wearied with their importunity, the priest at last said: "Very well, then, since I must marry you, I

suppose I must; but the ceremony shall be carried out in conformity to the penitential season. The bridesmaids must be dressed in deep mourning and the ushers will wear crape on their hats and sleeves. As for you," he said, turning to the prospective man and wife, "you will dress yourselves in sackcloth and on your heads you will sprinkle a generous supply of ashes. The organ will play a funeral dirge, and the invitations and cards will have a deep black border." The faces of the young people had been gradually growing longer while he spoke. When he had finished, they rose quietly, said they guessed they would postpone their marriage to Easter, and quietly took their departure.

Q. What is the nuptial Mass?

A. The nuptial Mass is a Mass appointed by the Church to invoke a special blessing upon the married couple.

A Mixed Marriage

Mixed marriages should be avoided. So opposed to them is the Church, that she refuses to publish the banns for them, as though they were a scandal to be kept secret. Neither does she allow such parties to be married at a nuptial Mass. The priest is not even permitted to don his surplice and stole, nor to light a candle, nor to bless the ring nor the marriage. The reason is that such marriages prove unhappy or detrimental to the faith. Every child born into the family, instead of being a new link of love, is an added reason for discord. The children are made indifferent or irreligious by the Protestant

parent's example. Such a parent is out of touch with his family when his children are baptized or confirmed or receive their first communion, or the last sacraments. He stands apart, either indifferent or inclined to scoff. When death invades the home, he cannot join in the prayers for the dying or the dead; in Church at the funeral, he sits while others kneel; and when he himself dies, he cannot be accorded the last privilege of resting by the side of his wife and his children in the consecrated family lot.

Q. Should Catholics be married at a nuptial Mass?

A. Catholics should be married at a nuptial Mass, because they thereby show greater reverence for the holy Sacrament and bring richer blessings upon their wedded life.

The Two Young Couples

Two boys and two girls lived in the same neighborhood and grew up together, always fast friends. Eventually they came to the parting of the ways, — one young man went to study for the priesthood, one of the girls entered the convent, and the remaining couple began keeping company with matrimonial intentions. It is not necessary to enumerate here all the spiritual retreats, devotional exercises, confessions and communions, and soul-searching examinations of conscience which the young student went through in preparation for the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Even the novice in religion had to spend years in preparation before she became a professed nun, although there was nothing sacramental about

her profession. If either the one or the other of these two had played the hypocrite, and under the cloak of a religious exterior, had spent the years of his or her probation in the practice of secret sins and every kind of hidden corruption, what would we naturally expect? We would expect that the result would be a bad priest and a bad nun, — a curse to themselves and their families and their communities and the Church generally. And is not marriage a Sacrament equally with Holy Orders? Should it not, then, be prepared for in a holy manner, and celebrated with as much religious pomp and ceremony as the religious profession or even Holy Orders? Be sure that as a poor preparation results in a bad priest and an unworthy religious, so an unholy term of company-keeping is the prelude to an unhappy marriage and much domestic discord.

LESSON THIRTY-SEVENTH

ON THE LAST JUDGMENT AND THE RESURRECTION, HELL, PURGATORY, AND HEAVEN

Q. When will Christ judge us?

A. Christ will judge us immediately after our death, and on the last day.

An Escaped Criminal

No one can evade the divine tribunal. In a certain town a man who had committed murder was confined in prison, awaiting his trial. The evidence was strong against him, and he would certainly have been condemned to death, had he been brought before the judge. Now it happened to be a time of war; the city was besieged and taken by the hostile army; it was given over to plunder, and finally the soldiers set fire to it. In consequence of this, the prisoners were all set at liberty. When the murderer in question left the prison, a free man, he gazed exultantly at the devouring flames, and said: "Now my enemies are all gone." A bystander, who was acquainted with him, overheard what he said, and answered him: "Yet your most powerful enemy is not gone." The criminal asked what he meant. The man then said: "Since you are guilty of murder, God is your enemy. He is more

powerful than any human judge. You cannot possibly escape from Him. His officer, grim death, will surely apprehend you, and drag you before the tribunal of the Most High." These solemn words impressed the criminal profoundly. They led him before long to the Sacrament of Penance, to make his peace with God : subsequently he delivered himself up voluntarily to justice, in order to expiate his crime on earth. A very light sentence was, however, passed on him on account of his self-accusation and public repentance.

"I was There"

The bountiful man will be richly rewarded by God in heaven. Once when the Emperor Napoleon was holding a review, he noticed among the troops as they marched past one man whose face was very familiar to him. He wished to ascertain in what battles that soldier had served under him, and calling him out of the ranks mentioned in succession the names of the places where his principal battles had been fought : Marengo ? Austerlitz ? Jena ? Wagram ? and so on. To each of these the man replied : "I was there." Finding that although he had taken part in so many battles, he was still no more than a private soldier, the emperor at once promoted him to a captaincy, and pinned the order of the Legion of Honor on his breast. Almighty God will act in like manner when all mankind appear before Him on the last great day of judgment. Those who have done their utmost to relieve the necessities of their fellowmen, and have contributed to excellent undertakings

(benevolent associations, charitable institutions), will receive signal honor at the hands of the Judge of all men.

Q. What is the judgment called which we have to undergo immediately after death?

A. The judgment we have to undergo immediately after death is called the particular judgment.

A Sailor's Good Sense

Those only die miserably who die in mortal sin. A sailor was about to embark on a vessel bound for India. One of his friends sought to deter him from undertaking so long a voyage, and one so perilous; moreover, he reminded him that his father lost his life out at sea. "Where did your father and grandfather die?" the sailor asked. "Both my father and grandfather died peaceably in their beds," his friend replied. "I wonder, then, that you can venture to lie down in bed at night," the sailor rejoined, "since your forefathers died in their beds." The other man said no more, for he saw that death can overtake one wherever one is, and that to die in the pursuit of one's calling is no misfortune. The same applies to military service.

The Balance of Divine Justice

Actions, creditable in themselves, which are performed only to gain human approval, are not good works. A pious anchorite, before retiring to rest

one night, made a meditation on the particular judgment, especially dwelling in thought on these words of Holy Scripture, "Every one shall bear his own burden" (Gal. vi. 5), and considering the fact that every one of our actions will be weighed in the balance of God's Judgment. In the night that followed he had a remarkable dream. He saw Our Lord Jesus in His character of judge, surrounded by angels. In the hand of an angel was a balance. Every mortal who died, appeared forthwith before his Divine Judge, laden with two burdens, the one containing his good works, the other his sinful actions. The angels placed the two burdens, one in each scale of the balance. If the one with the good works was the heavier, then Christ pardoned the individual before Him; but if the scale containing his misdeeds outweighed it, then that soul was condemned to eternal punishment. Among others a woman presented herself before the divine tribunal carrying a large parcel of good works and a small one of sins. But when the angels placed the two packages in the scales, the small package proved by far the heavier; the other was hollow and empty, because the woman had performed all her good works, numerous as they were, with a view to the approbation of man. Let us learn in doing good only to seek the favor of God.*

Q. What is the judgment called which all men have to undergo on the last day?

A. The judgment which all men have to undergo on the last day is called the general judgment.

The Representation of the Last Judgment

The remembrance of the final judgment urges us to do penance. Serious reflection upon the last judgment cannot fail to have an effect upon the most hardened sinner. Of this the following is an example. Borgoris, king of Bulgaria, who, like his subjects, was a heathen, asked St. Methodius, the apostle of the Slavs, to paint a picture which should inspire all who beheld it with terror. The monk chose the last judgment as his motive. He portrayed Christ seated on a throne, around Him the beauteous angels; on His right hand an immense multitude of men, glorified beings, their countenances beaming with celestial delight, — they represented the redeemed; on the left hand stood another multitude, men of hideous aspect, trembling with anxiety and apprehension, — they were the sinners. In the foreground of the picture a deep abyss was to be seen, filled with frightful devils holding in their hands instruments of torture. Out of this pit flames and smoke arose. When Methodius brought this picture to the king, he was greatly pleased, and declared that he had never seen anything so beautiful, and at the same time so awe-inspiring and terrible. He asked the meaning of the scene depicted. Thereupon Methodius began to preach the Gospel to him, explaining the doctrine of the final judgment. The result of his instruction was that the king expressed a wish to be baptized, and during the remainder of his life thought of the final judgment before entering upon any important action.

St. Charles Borromeo Playing at Billiards

Even the recreations of the Christian are meritorious before God, if they are engaged in with an eye to His glory. The following anecdote is related of St. Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan. On one occasion the saint, at the request of several priests, took part in a game of billiards. While the game was going on, one of the priests said: "What should we do if we knew that the last judgment would take place in an hour?" One said: "I should immediately betake myself to prayer." Another declared: "I should at once make a general confession of my whole life." Various replies were made by others who were present. St. Charles kept silence; he knew that the question was proposed to see what he would say. When at length the inquiry was addressed to him, he answered: "I should quietly continue the game, because I began it with the intention of honoring God." This reply was totally unexpected, and made a great impression on all who heard it. Thus we see that even in our recreations we may give glory to God.

Q. Why does Christ judge men immediately after death?

A. Christ judges men immediately after death to reward or punish them according to their deeds.

The Sword of Damocles

The remembrance of death leads to amendment of life. About four hundred years before Christ the

island of Sicily was ruled by a tyrant known as Dionysius of Syracuse. One of his friends, named Damocles, begged to be allowed one day to dine at the royal table. The king, therefore, invited him one day to a banquet, whereat the most rare and costly wines and delicacies of all kinds were served. Damocles had scarcely taken his seat at the table, when glancing up, he observed a sword over his head, suspended by a single horsehair. Nothing before him any longer tempted his appetite, he could eat nothing in his terror, for every moment his life was in danger. We mortals upon earth are in much the same position as was Damocles: the sword of death hangs over our head, by day and by night. At any moment God may call us out of this world. He who has the thought of death ever present to his mind, will surely not take excessive delight in earthly pleasures.

A Loaf of Bread Turns the Scale

Almsgiving atones for sin. St. John the Almoner relates the following instructive anecdote. A miser was occupied in baking bread when a poor man came up to him and begged for a crust. As he was persistent in his entreaty, the rich man threw him a loaf. The next night he had a dream. He dreamed that he was dead, and that he stood before the judgment seat of God. An angel was holding a balance: in one scale were his sins which weighed it down like so many stones; in the other scale were his good works, which did not nearly counterbalance them. Presently an angel came up and laid a loaf of bread

on the scale. It instantly went down below the other. Then the man awoke; he plainly perceived that almighty God intended to correct him by means of that dream, and exhort him to practice greater liberality. From that time forth he sought to expiate his sins by charity to the poor.

Q. What are the rewards or punishments appointed for men's souls after the particular judgment?

A. The rewards and punishments appointed for men's souls after the particular judgment are heaven, purgatory, and hell.

The Mendicant Dying in a Barn

Devotion to St. Barbara is conducive to a happy death. One night a loud knock was heard at the door of a village presbytery. The priest opened the window, and putting his head out, asked who was there, and what he wanted. A man stepped forward and begged the priest to come immediately to one who was at the point of death. The clergyman hastily dressed, went to the church for the Blessed Sacrament and the oils, and forthwith set out on his way, preceded by the messenger, who carried the lantern and the bell. Presently he stopped before a large farmhouse, and knocked loudly at the door. Having done so, he put the lantern and the bell on the ground and disappeared in the darkness. In a few minutes the farmer, roused by the knocking, came down to see who was there. When he saw the priest with the Blessed Sacrament, he was aston-

ished, for there was no one ill in the house. After thinking for a moment, it occurred to him that he had given a tramp permission to sleep in an outhouse, and he despatched one of his men to see whether he was there, and if anything was amiss with him. The man on returning reported that the beggar was lying in the barn, apparently very ill. The priest went to him and found he was indeed in a dying condition; he administered the sacraments to him, and the poor man received them with gratitude and fervent devotion. Afterward the priest asked him whom he had sent to call him. "I sent no one," he replied. "All I can say is, that I have daily besought St. Barbara most earnestly not to allow me to die without the last sacraments." Before day dawned the man expired.

A Peasant's Contribution to the War Fund

He who performs good deeds only for the sake of earthly reward will receive no recompense from God. The Emperor Francis I of Austria was for many years involved in hostilities with France, and consequently was in need of large subsidies. His loyal subjects did their utmost to supply him with funds to carry on the war. One day a simple peasant presented himself at the palace in Vienna and asked to see the emperor. On being admitted into the imperial presence he advanced to the table and placed upon it a bag containing 1000 gulden (about $500) saying: "I have brought something for your Majesty's acceptance." The emperor, astonished that a workingman should bring so large a sum, asked

what his name was. But the man answered: "Nobody need know my name, your Majesty," and with a profound obeisance he took his departure. The emperor despatched several of his attendants after the man, to inquire his name and place of residence; but he only said: "Is it likely that I should tell you my name, when I have already refused to let the emperor know it?" This man acted nobly, since he declined any earthly reward for his good deed.

Q. What is hell?

A. Hell is a state to which the wicked are condemned, and in which they are deprived of the sight of God for all eternity, and are in dreadful torments.

A Perilous Situation

He who frequently thinks of death, will enjoy earthly pleasures only in moderation. A pious king was one day asked by his brother why he took so little part in worldly pleasures. "My dear fellow," the king answered, "supposing I were to put a rotten plank across a deep pit, at the bottom of which a fire was burning, and you were obliged to go and stand on that plank. Then suppose I set four soldiers around you with lowered bayonets almost touching your person, while over your head a sharp sword was suspended by a single thread. After that I would have the choicest viands placed before you, and station a band close by to play enlivening airs. Could you enjoy your food and listen with any pleasure to the music while you were in such a position?" The young man, who

had listened attentively to this long speech from his brother's lips, answered unhesitatingly: "No, it would be quite impossible to be merry if I were surrounded by so many dangers." The king continued: "Now think, if you could not enjoy anything because you were in constant danger of death to the body, how can I take pleasure in anything worldly, seeing that my soul is threatened by a far greater danger, that of eternal perdition? I have below me the fire of hell; I stand on a rotten plank, my frail body; death may strike me at any moment; and over me the sword of eternal justice is suspended." The young man saw the justice of what his royal brother said, and from that time forth he amended his life.

Q. What is purgatory?

A. Purgatory is the state in which those suffer for a time who die guilty of venial sins, or without having satisfied for the punishment due to their sins.

Three Days in Purgatory

It is well for us to expiate our sins in this life. A devout Christian who was sick, having prayed to be delivered from his malady, God answered him by means of a dream. One night he dreamed that an angel appeared to him and warned him that he had not long to live. He then bade the sick man choose whether he would have three years more of suffering upon earth, or three days of suffering in the fires of purgatory. The sick man made choice of the latter. Shortly afterward, he died. When he was in purgatory, the same angel appeared to him to console

him. The suffering soul then said to his celestial visitor: "Thou saidst that I should only suffer here for three days, and now I have been here for at least three years." "Thou art greatly mistaken," the angel answered; "thou hast been here only a few minutes. Thy body on earth is not yet cold." Truly, no suffering on earth is to be compared to the pains of purgatory. Consequently it is far better to expiate one's sins in this life. St. Augustine was right when he said: "Lord, here burn, here cut, here consume, but spare my soul in eternity."

The Weeping Mother

Our tears will not help the departed. A lady who had lost her son, was continually weeping and bewailing her bereavement. God showed her in a dream the folly of her conduct. She dreamed that she saw a company of youths hastening joyfully toward a beautiful city. She looked eagerly to see if her son was among them, but she could not perceive him. At last he appeared, following them at a considerable distance. He looked miserable, tired, and his garments were wet through. On his mother inquiring the reason why he looked so unhappy, he answered: "Your useless weeping is to blame for it: my clothes are soaked with your tears. If you only would give alms and have Masses said for me, instead of lamenting my death as you do!" Thereupon the lady awoke. From that moment she was a changed woman; she no longer acted as a foolish mother, but as a wise Christian.

Q. Can the faithful on earth help the souls in purgatory?

A. The faithful on earth can help the souls in purgatory by their prayers, fasts, almsdeeds; by indulgences, and by having Masses said for them.

The Bride and her Bouquets

Numerous and costly wreaths are of no benefit to the departed. A young lady, the daughter of wealthy parents, was about to be married. She was to have a large dowry, and the gentleman to whom she was engaged was also very rich. Every morning he sent her a magnificent bouquet which cost $8. One day his affianced bride, who felt sure that the flowers were very expensive, asked him what they cost. He told her what he paid for them. "Well," she replied, "we are going to be married in ten days' time. If you go on sending me these bouquets every day, you will spend $80. If you wish to please me, be so good as to give me the money instead." He complied with her request, and gave her the money. She then said: "I am sure that you will have no objection to my giving this sum to a poor family who have met with great misfortunes. They will pray for us, and that will do us more good than the most splendid bouquets would." If the suffering souls in purgatory could speak, they would say much the same as this sensible young lady: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity, that, when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings."

The Archduke Albert's Wish Concerning Wreaths

Field Marshal, the Archduke Albert of Austria, renowned for the brilliant victory he won at Custozza (1866), himself the son of a no less distinguished general, died in the year 1895. Before his death he expressly forbade any expense to be incurred in buying wreaths for his funeral, remarking at the same time that the money would be put to a far better use if it were given to the poor, or spent on Masses for the repose of his soul. It would be well if this example were more generally followed.

St. Perpetua and her Brother

Since it is the duty of Christians to succor their deceased relatives, God sometimes allows them to be acquainted with their state. St. Perpetua, who was martyred at Carthage in the year 202, records in a letter written by her own hand a vision which she had while in prison. She beheld her brother, who had died at the age of seven years, in a dark place, covered with mud and parched with thirst. When she awoke, she understood what this dream signified. She spent the next day in earnest prayer for her brother. A few nights later he appeared to her again in a dream, but this time he was beside a cool spring whose waters he could drink; his garments were clean: he looked much better and was quite cheerful. Only she saw that the child had a scar upon his face. The saint was greatly consoled by this second vision. Although, as a rule, no importance is attached to

dreams, because they most frequently are the result of undue excitement, of a bad state of health, or a disordered stomach, yet there are exceptional cases, when dreams are to be regarded as a special favor from God. This we see in the case of the patriarch Joseph. Dreams of this nature generally occur immediately before one awakes, they make a deep and lasting impression on the mind, and are never effaced from the memory. Perhaps our angel guardians have something to do with them.

Q. If every one is judged immediately after death, what need is there of a general judgment?

A. There is need of a general judgment, though every one is judged immediately after death, that the providence of God, which, on earth, often permits the good to suffer and the wicked to prosper, may in the end appear just before all men.

The Man Sick unto Death

Death is not really an evil, since it is the passage to life eternal. A nobleman one day, when out hunting with his attendants, passed by a cottage garden where lay a man whose emaciated and pallid countenance announced him to be grievously sick. Yet he was singing a hymn. The nobleman expressed his astonishment that one whose end was evidently not far off could sing so cheerily. "Why should I not be cheerful?" the sick man said. "Does not our holy religion teach us that death is not loss, but gain, to the Christian? I hope soon to go to the presence of God in the realms of eternal

felicity, where tears and sorrow are unknown. How, then, could I be sad?" Thereupon he began to sing anew. The nobleman and his followers were more surprised than ever to see what courage religion can impart to man.

Q. Will our bodies share in the reward and punishment of our souls?

A. Our bodies will share in the reward or punishment of our souls, because through the resurrection they will again be united to them.

After Six

We should prepare ourselves for death in good time. Duke Henry of Bavaria, who later on wore the imperial crown of Germany under the title of Henry II, and was subsequently raised by the Church to her altars, was in the habit of going frequently to pray at the tomb of St. Wolfgang, in the church of St. Emmeram in Regensburg. Once in a dream he saw St. Wolfgang standing beside him, pointing to the wall, on which these words were inscribed : *After six . . .* When the vision vanished and Duke Henry awoke, he thought the mysterious inscription was intended to signify that he would die in six days' time. Thereupon he prepared himself carefully for death ; he made a general confession, gave large alms to the poor, and spent long hours in prayer. However, at the end of six days he was as well as ever ; he therefore concluded that six months was the space of time he had yet to live, and he continued his religious exercises during that period. Again his surmise

proved wrong; he, therefore, thought he would die after the lapse of six years, and throughout that time he led a pious, recollected life. But after six years he did not die; on the contrary, he was raised, at the age of thirty, to the throne of the German empire (1002). Now, at last, the meaning of the dream was made clear. As emperor he was to live holily, and be an example to all. This he did, for by keeping himself constantly in a state of preparation for death, he had attained a high degree of sanctity.

Q. In what state will the bodies of the just rise?

A. The bodies of the just will rise glorious and immortal.

A Robber of Graves Put to Flight

Precautions should be taken by relatives to prevent the burial of those who only appear to be dead. In bygone days it was not such a very uncommon occurrence for people to be buried without being really dead. A popular writer relates the following incident: A young lady of rank died in the bloom of her youth and beauty. When laid in the coffin, she was attired richly, and adorned with a great deal of jewelry, — rings, a necklace of pearls, and precious stones. The gravedigger knew this, and in the night following her interment he went with a lantern to the vault, and, entering it, opened the coffin, for the purpose of robbing the corpse. But no sooner did he touch the body than the lady, who was supposed to be dead, sat upright, looked fixedly at him, and said: "What do you want?" The

gravedigger was terrified; leaving his lantern on the floor, he fled in hot haste. The young lady, who was not really dead, but only in a trance, got up, took the lantern, and walked home. When she reached her parents' house, every one was seized with indescribable astonishment and alarm, believing they saw a ghost; but erelong they rejoiced at the recovery of one whom they had lost. It must be a horrible sensation for one who is not really dead to awaken to life in the grave; he must die in agony and despair. On this account no one ought to be buried until at least two whole days and nights have elapsed after his death.

Q. Will the bodies of the damned also rise?

A. The bodies of the damned will also rise, but they will be condemned to eternal punishment.

The Seed Three Thousand Years Old

Many things in nature point to a future resurrection. A withered, shriveled onion was once found in the hand of an Egyptian mummy. It had been entombed with the body for more than three thousand years. It was moistened, and it began to germinate; planted in the ground, it grew and put forth leaves. — Can we imagine that the human body, which is so far nobler a creation than an onion, should be inferior to it in vitality?

Q. What is heaven?

A. Heaven is the state of everlasting life in which we see God face to face, are made like unto Him in glory, and enjoy eternal happiness.

Crown or Sword?

Heaven is won only by suffering. Charles V, king of France, who was called *the wise*, once laid on one table in his room his crown and scepter, on another a naked sword. He then called his son into his presence, and said: "Now make your choice between what is on this table or on that." The prince took up the sword, and replied with a smile: "By this I will win that." — So it is with the Christian; through conflict he attains the crown; if we bear the sufferings of this life with steadfast courage, we shall reach the bliss of heaven.

The Money in the Laborer's Boots

The happiness which is the result of almsgiving is a foretaste of our eternal recompense. A nobleman's son, walking out with his tutor, came to the outskirts of a forest, adjoining which was a meadow. In this meadow a laborer was working barefoot, having left his boots on the verge of the wood. The lad saw them, and wanted to hide them. His tutor reproved him, saying: "Do not cause the poor man an annoyance; rather, give him a pleasure. If you take my advice, you will put a piece of silver in each of his boots. We will look on from a distance, and see what he does when he puts them on." The boy did as his tutor suggested. In a short time the man left off work and came up to the wood to put on his boots. As he felt something in them, he pulled them off again, and looked

to see what it was. When he saw the money, he fell on his knees, raised his eyes to heaven, and gave God thanks for having succored him in a season of extreme need. He called down blessings and happiness on his unknown benefactor. The boy, who was near enough to hear what the man said, was so touched that he wept for joy. On his way home he told his tutor that he had never felt so happy in his life. See how the merciful feel beforehand an earnest of the bliss of heaven.

Q. What words should we bear always in mind?

A. We should bear always in mind these words of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul, or what exchange shall a man give for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then will He render to every man according to his works."

The Science of the Cross

A Catholic priest, walking along a country lane, fell in with a schoolboy who was going in the same direction as himself. As they walked along, the priest asked the child a few questions, in order to ascertain whether he had any religious knowledge. Among other things he asked him whether rich people could go to heaven. "Oh, yes," the boy replied, "if they are good to the poor." "And the poor, can they go to heaven?" the priest inquired.

"Oh, yes, if they bear their cross patiently and uncomplainingly," was the child's answer. The priest often narrated this conversation, adding: "In what that child said there lies true philosophy, the science of the cross."—Without the cross—that is, without sufferings and privations—there is no real happiness on earth nor eternal happiness hereafter.

The Wealthy Father and his Three Sons

No one should trust to the aid his relations will render him after his death. A man who had accumulated a large fortune by means of usury and other unjust practices, when laid on a sick bed desired to know what his sons would do for the repose of his soul when he should have departed this life. He summoned one after another to his side and put the same question to each. The eldest promised to say a great many prayers for him; the second said he would have the holy sacrifice frequently offered for him; the third and youngest said fearlessly: "Father, you had better do something for yourself while you have time, or our prayers and good works will avail you nothing. Send for the priest, and make your peace with God." At first the old man was enraged at this plain speaking; but when he reflected on his son's words, he saw their justice. He received the last sacraments with every sign of contrition, and restored a great part of his unjust gains. — He who relies on the aid of others, instead of doing all he can for his soul's salvation, will find himself in an evil case.

Hercules at the Crossroads

The practice of virtue is frequently irksome to human nature, but it leads to true happiness. The pagan Greeks relate the following fable: A youth named Hercules was standing at a place where two roads met, undecided which to take. Then there came up to him two guides. One was fair to look upon and flattering in her speech, promising him all manner of enjoyments, if he would follow her guidance. The other offered him no present delights, but rather struggle and suffering, but these would be succeeded by supreme happiness. Hercules chose the latter, and followed the second guide. This fable contains a deep truth. The first guide who presented herself to the young man was sin; she gives temporary pleasures to those who follow her, but afterward suffering, both here and hereafter, is their portion. The other guide personates virtue; her service is oftentimes painful and difficult, but it results in happiness, both in time and in eternity.

The Emperor Sigismund and his Nobles

Virtue ennobles man. The German emperor Sigismund (410–437) was in the habit of conferring high posts and offices in the State, not so often on candidates of rank as on men of low origin, who were distinguished for talent and virtue. Finding that he gave offense by not giving the preference to the nobility, he said: "Men who are eminent for their talent and virtue have been ennobled by God Him-

self, others only owe their rank to earthly monarchs." Remember the proverb: True nobility consists not in birth, but in worth.

A King Himself and the Scion of a Royal Race

The courtiers of King Alfonso V of Aragon thought to please him by reminding him that he was not merely a king himself, but also the son, the brother, the nephew of kings. Alfonso said to these sycophants: "I do not pride myself on all this; the fact that my ancestors and my relatives were great men redounds in no wise to my credit. To be distinguished for virtue is a man's greatest honor"

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